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PERSONALITIES OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



# Personalities of the Eighteenth Century

BY

GRACE A. MURRAY

(Mrs. KEITH MURRAY)

WITH A FOREWORD BY

NIGEL PLAYFAIR



*ILLUSTRATED*

HEATH CRANTON LIMITED

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TO MY BROTHER  
CAVENDISH  
I AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATE  
THIS BOOK





## FOREWORD

I SUCCUMB with some misgiving to the flattering temptation with which Mrs. Keith Murray has cunningly assailed me, a misgiving born of that feeling with which I have read some forewords from other pens, and which I fear may be reciprocal.

For my qualifications, such as they are, are theatrical and not literary, my powers of expression are confused and hindered when I sit down at a permanently situated desk.

Moreover, to be perfectly truthful, it is not my love for the Eighteenth Century and my acquaintance with its ways and characters that has chiefly moved me to put its plays upon the stage. I prefer myself the plays of the greater period that preceded it.

But the knowledge has forced itself upon me that the spirit of this age, for what reason it is beyond my philosophy to determine, is nearer in sympathy and understanding to Queen Anne and the first three Georges than to Elizabeth and James, just as it is nearer to all five of them than to Albert the Good, and even King Edward the Seventh.

Fortunately for me, it is the business of a fore-speaker to recommend, if conscientiously he is able, and not to criticize, and here my conscience, which, all things considered, is tender enough, will serve me.

## FOREWORD

Mrs. Keith Murray's is a book of anecdotes, than which nothing may be more desolating, especially when the poor player is the subject of the anecdotist.

But Mrs. Keith Murray's book is otherwise.

Her stories are not all new, to be sure. The best stories, after all, can seldom be that, for a good tale, like murder, will out.

But they are told, even when they are merely retold, with an evident appreciation and enjoyment which I feel must carry a pleasant infection—and her choice of personalities is catholic, ranging as it does from Whitefield to Master Betty.

He, it is true, is scarcely to be claimed by the Eighteenth Century. He was born within it, but his professional life, though it began at ten years old or less, was passed in the nineteenth, and his "art" and appeal was certainly a reflection upon it.

I myself, though as yet I can almost number the grey hairs that I shall carry in sorrow to my grave, might have visited him before he died, if my foster-mother had only had the intelligence to realize what a stimulus such a visit would have created in her lethargic burden.

Moreover, was not Miss Ninetta Crummles, the famous Infant Phenomenon, the illegitimate daughter of his decadence?

I make the insinuation strictly figuratively of course. Mrs. Vincent Crummles was kept far too busy to be frail even if she ever felt so mundane an inclination, which I doubt, and Master Betty never grew to be a respectable actor, much less a rake.

## FOREWORD

But this is a digression into criticism which is, as I have said, out of my part.

I make an exit after this brief prologue—quite happy in the consciousness that her audience will enjoy their evening with Mrs. Keith Murray's Puppets as much as I have done.

NIGEL PLAYFAIR.



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## CHAPTER I

Edward Shuter — George Whitefield — Christopher Smart—  
William Huntington—Thomas Britton.

OF few actors can it be said that they were as humorous off the stage as on, yet such a claim has been made by the contemporaries of Edward Shuter, the comic actor, described by Churchill in his *Rosciad* as :

“ Shuter, who never cared a single pin  
Whether he left out nonsense, or put it in.”

He it was who created the part of “ Croaker ” in Goldsmith’s *Good Natured Man*, and was the original “ Hardcastle ” in *She Stoops to Conquer*, and “ Sir Anthony Absolute ” in *The Rivals*.

The origin of Shuter is doubtful. It is said that he was born in a cellar near Covent Garden, and was the offspring of a chairman and an oyster-woman. From a book entitled *Theatrical Biography or Memoirs of the Principal Performers of the Three Theatres Royal :*

- (1) Drury Lane,
- (2) Covent Garden,
- (3) Hay-Market,

published in 1772, is to be found the following amusing

### “ POSTSCRIPT.”

“ Ned Shuter, to the Printer, greeting.

“ Whereas in a quotation from a book entitled *Theatrical Biography*, there is a circumstantial account of my family, I beg, for the credit of your book, and to avoid an imposition on the public, in a matter which

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*so much concerns them* to be acquainted with, that you will correct a mistake the writer of those memoirs has made. For whereas the said writer does, with great confidence assert, that my '*Father was a Chairman, that my Mother sold oysters, and that I, Ned Shuter, was born in a cellar*'; now, though I will acknowledge that my *Father* was a *Chairman*, though I have no objection to own that my *Mother sold oysters* in the *winter*, and *cucumbers* in the *summer*, yet I do solemnly aver, that I was *not* born in a Cellar, but in a *front room*, up *two* pair of stairs, at one Mr. *Merit's*, an eminent *Chimney-Sweeper*, in Vine Street, St. Giles'. Having thus discharged my conscience, by rectifying any mistake the public might fall into on so *important* a subject, I remain with gratitude

Their obedient servant,

NED SHUTER."

But whether Shuter first looked out upon the world from the obscurity of a cellar, or from the more exalted level of two pairs of stairs, the fact remains that he was a child of the gutter, and picked up a living as best he might, entirely dependent on his own powers of resource, wholly without education. Indeed even in later years he was only just able to write an "order" to the theatre, and could with difficulty read his part.

When Ned was twelve years old he was engaged as pot-boy in a public-house in Covent Garden, where he appears to have been on friendly terms with the numerous family of rats who invaded it, and who, to show their appreciation for the delicacy of sop dipped in porter, allowed themselves to be carried about between his shirt and waistcoat. But Shuter's circle of friends was soon to be enlarged, for an old actor observing unusual signs of low humour in the boy, engaged him as his apprentice. The new duties which

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now fell to Shuter gave him many opportunities of going behind the scenes; and his wit and good-nature made him such a favourite in the Green Room that he went by the name of "comical Ned."

On the death of his master, Shuter attached himself to a company of strolling players, a poverty-stricken lot of fellows, who were just able to earn enough to keep body and soul together. Upon one occasion, when funds were very low, we hear of his being only a "sharer" of fourpence halfpenny a night, and two ends of a candle; while another time his finances were so distinctly unsatisfactory that he felt constrained to steal his landlord's sign. In this theft there was a certain irony, for his landlord was a baker, his sign being a loaf!

Although Shuter's affairs slightly mended, he was obliged for a considerable time to accept inferior parts. But Garrick was watching; and feeling that all Shuter needed was to have his talents guided in the right direction, he altered Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, and gave the character of "Mr. Stephen" to Shuter, which part brought him his first real success. One valuable asset the actor possessed: such mobile features that he was able to alter his face according to his fancy; at times it assumed the most absurd shapes, which, slightly exaggerated, would have become a grimace. We also hear that Ned was inimitable at street cries.

In common with other wits, Shuter had a genius for extricating himself from awkward positions at the expense of another. Travelling once in the north of England, his money or his life was suddenly demanded. "Money," said Shuter with a vacant look and a shrug of his shoulders. "Oh Lord, sir, they never trust me with any, for Nuncle here" (pointing to a stranger by his side who was pretending to be asleep) "always pays for me, turnpikes and all, your honour." The

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highwayman immediately pounced upon the pretended sleeper and robbed him of every shilling he possessed, while his "nephew" lost not a sou.

It is said that Shuter was unequal in his acting, and so indolent that he would often leave out portions of his part. He has also been accused by Churchill with reckless "gagging." But for criticisms such as these he would no doubt have had as ready an answer as when, remonstrated with for having holes in his stockings: "A hole," he remarked, "is the accident of a day, but a darn is premeditated poverty." Unfortunately poor Ned had more formidable weaknesses to grapple with: gambling and his love of the bottle.

A book appeared which caused Shuter some annoyance, entitled *The Dramatic History of Master Edward, Miss Ann and others*. Collected from Zaplaniels' original papers by G. A. Steevens. Now Steevens was in the habit of writing "pieces of humour" for Shuter to recite at his benefit performances. But the above-mentioned book was written when Steevens was at strife with the comedian, its sole object being to bring ridicule upon him and Nancy Dawson, a well-known dancer and a lady of the town, who through Shuter's exertions had obtained an engagement at Covent Garden Theatre.

As years passed, the actor became a devoted adherent of Whitefield, the preacher, and a most generous subscriber to "The Tabernacle." From this time it may be said that he divided his attention between listening to the emotional discourses of the great Methodist, and drowning the recollection of them in deep potations of wine. This seeming contradiction was perfectly sincere; at the moment the one impulse was as real as the other. When praying at Whitefield's meetings he fully believed he had received a genuine "call"; and even when in his cups, he was sometimes seized by the feeling that he must go into the fields and hold forth upon sin and regeneration. Perhaps this conflict between hope and

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despair which so convulsed poor Shuter, may have, in conjunction with the effects of dissipation, hastened his death, which took place when he was only forty-six.

At his last benefit at Colman's Theatre, he was so enfeebled by illness that, unable to continue his part, he muttered a half audible apology; the audience entering into the pathos of the situation, dispensed with the latter part of his performance. Soon after died that kind-hearted comedian; and Dibden, the dramatist, has written of him that: "Neither on the French, nor on the English stage, do we find anyone to whom we can compare him. . . . I look upon him, as far as it went, to have been one of the best burletta singers in the world."

It must have been a sore disappointment to Whitefield that Shuter still remained in the camp of the ungodly, for apart from his generous donations to "The Tabernacle," Whitefield seems to have given the actor more than a passing thought. As a boy the Calvinist preacher had himself had leanings towards the drama, and when at school he once acted a girl's part, dressed in girl's clothes. With what horror must he, in later years, have remembered this incident.

Not even his worst enemy could have accused Whitefield of being a sluggard: we hear of him preaching a sermon one Christmas Day at four in the morning, which was followed by a second one at six, when the preacher owned to feeling "a little oppressed with drowsiness": then came the Sacrament, and the day was concluded by three more sermons.

Quite a bevy of fashionable people attended Whitefield's meetings: amongst others were the famous Duchess of Marlborough, Lord Chesterfield, and Lady Huntingdon, who afterwards made him her private chaplain, and was one of his most zealous converts. Lady Suffolk, that lady of elastic morals, was upon one occasion persuaded to attend a meeting held at Lady



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Huntingdon's house; but, though unconscious of her presence, Whitefield portrayed the lapses of Society ladies with such unerring accuracy that Lady Suffolk believed the shaft was aimed at herself. She restrained herself so far as to sit out the sermon, but as soon as Mr. Whitefield had taken his leave she flew into a violent passion, abused Lady Huntingdon vehemently, and though forced by her relations to offer an apology, she did so with ill-humour, and immediately afterwards left the house, never to return.

Perhaps one reason why Whitefield so successfully held his immense audiences, which on occasions numbered many thousands, was because he possessed the gift of picturing with realistic vividness the subjects of his discourses. Once, when describing a blind beggar as he tottered over the brink of a precipice, Lord Chesterfield sprang from his seat crying: "Good God! he's gone." Another graphic description is given by Hume the historian, who says that in one of his sermons, Whitefield, after a solemn pause, continued: "The attendant angel is just now about to leave the threshold and ascend to Heaven, and shall he not bear with him the news of one sinner from among all this multitude reclaimed from the error of his way?" Then, to give greater effect to his words, Whitefield stamped his foot, and lifting up his eyes to Heaven he cried: "Stop, Gabriel! Stop, Gabriel! Stop ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God."

Like all reformers Whitefield was extremely masterful; one might almost say that he bullied his flock into the "narrow" way. Upon one occasion, when preaching a charity sermon on behalf of some sufferers in a terrible disaster, he closed his sermon with the words: "We will sing a hymn, during which those who do not choose to give their mite on this awful occasion may sneak off." It is hardly necessary to say that none had

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the courage to stir, and after a few moments Whitefield descended majestically from the pulpit, and taking up his position at the doors, which he had ordered to be locked, he held the plate himself. Could any form of tyranny have been more absolute? Yet of neither of Whitefield's parents could it be said that they were in the least remarkable. His father, who kept the Bull Inn at Gloucester, was a worthy but a commonplace kind of man; and his mother had so little insight into her son's talents, that when he told her he intended becoming a preacher, she exclaimed: "What does the boy mean? Prithee hold thy tongue."

When George was fifteen he was, much to his chagrin, recalled from a most desirable school, where the boys acted the plays their enterprising master had written. But business at the Bull Inn was going to the dogs, and George was required at home to perform the uncongenial task of a drawer; to his credit it may be said that he cleaned rooms and washed out mops with a rare good-will. After a while, however, thanks to the generosity of his friends, sufficient money was collected to send him to Oxford, in the humble capacity of servitor. Here he formed an ardent friendship with the two Wesley brothers, though later on, over the doctrine of "election," the friends fell to wrangling in a way which was not wholly Christian.

It is curious to hear that when Whitefield was about to sail for Georgia, to which place he believed he had received a "call," Wesley, who doubted the wisdom of this journey, adopted the Moravian method of settling such questions by casting lots. But Whitefield had no belief in juggling with fate, and notwithstanding the answer being in the negative, he started for Georgia, to which country he took no fewer than seven journeys. On his return to England, some hair-splitting differences of doctrine brought him into conflict with the Church, who, moreover, accused him of preaching without a

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licence, and threatened him with excommunication; many churches closed their doors on him, and he was often obliged to preach in the fields.

Once Whitefield received a pressing invitation to visit two ministers in Dunfermline, a certain Rev. Ralph and Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, who had lately started a sect of their own, and to conduct a preaching mission. Whitefield was warned that he would find the Scotch "lifeless, lukewarm, and upsmitten"; nevertheless, Whitefield arrived; but, far from wishing to keep exclusively to the sect founded by these two gentlemen, they found to their consternation that he would be just as willing to preach in the Pope's pulpit, if he had been given the loan of it. These were dark days for that particular branch of Erskines, and they resorted to the old expedient of "a fast, and humiliation." They called him, alas! many unpleasing names, as religious people of that type have a way of doing: though eventually the quarrel was patched up.

It is difficult to imagine anything more cold-blooded than the way Whitefield wooed the lady of his choice. In a letter addressed to her parents, he writes: "I bless God, if I know anything of my own heart, I am free from that foolish passion which the world calls love." He certainly wished "Miss D." to be under no delusions, for, in the letter in which he makes her an offer of marriage, he tells her that "the passionate expressions which carnal courtiers use" should be omitted by those who would "marry in the Lord." Probably the lady preferred a lover who included "passionate expressions" in his wooing, for she rejected the addresses of her lukewarm suitor. Whitefield was, however, in no way inconsolable, more especially as he afterwards heard that "Miss D.," far from being a "robust Christian," was "in a seeking state only." Eventually he married a Welsh lady, a widow of some thirty-six years, who would not, he



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hoped, "hinder" him in his labours. His bride had few recommendations, rumour even hinted that scandal had touched her in the past; under such circumstances it is hardly surprising to hear that the marriage was not an unqualified success.

Similar experiences to these befell John Wesley in his matrimonial enterprise: he, too, married a widow, for "reasons best known to myself," but his widow, unlike Whitefield's, was endowed with a goodly portion of this world's goods. She was also, which was less desirable, endowed with a vixenish temper, and showed such furious jealousy at her husband's frequent absences at meetings, that in a fit of exasperation he once scathingly asked her: "Of what importance is your character to mankind? If you were buried just now, or if you had never been born, what loss would it be to the cause of God?"

Ned Shuter, we have already heard, divided a considerable portion of his time between his prayers and the wine bottle; the same might be said of Christopher Smart, the poet. Smart came of an old north-country family, his father being steward to Lord Vane. Young Christopher's poetic efforts first attracted notice at school, and presently we hear of his being "discerned and patronized" by Henrietta, Duchess of Cleveland, who allowed him forty pounds a year during her life; and, money being scarce in the Smart family, it was mainly owing to the generosity of the Duchess, that Christopher was able to enter Pembroke College, Cambridge, of which a few years later he became a Fellow; being afterwards appointed Prælector in Philosophy, and Keeper of the Common Room.

Smart shows little enthusiasm over Pembroke College, for he speaks of it as:

". . . This servile cell  
Where discipline and dullness dwell."

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It is easy to understand why discipline did not appeal to him, for we hear that he had developed a taste for extravagance and "tavern parlours," and that upon one occasion he was confined to his room for several days in order to escape his creditors.

The insanity which was henceforth, at intervals, to shadow the life of the unhappy poet, now first made its appearance, and for a short time the horrid walls of Bedlam engulfed him; this brief visit was evidently repeated, for several entries appear in the Treasury to the effect that "Mr. Smart, being obliged to be absent," the College undertook to pay certain allowances "in consideration of his circumstances." But these "circumstances" did not include the poet's secret marriage with the stepdaughter of the publisher Newbery, and, the news leaking out, the authorities were extremely irate. Luckily for Smart, he had gained the Seatonian prize for the best poem on the attributes of the Supreme Being, and as long as he continued to compete for this prize, the authorities saw fit to pardon the enormity of his secret marriage, and allowed him to keep his name on the College books free of expense.

That cantankerous quack doctor, Sir John Hill, did not spare even poor Kit, for he wrote a virulent attack on him, to which the poet retaliated by a mock heroic poem, entitled *The Hilliard*, in which he wittily described the doctor as "the insolvent tenant of incumber'd space."

But, toil as he might at his poems and other literary work, Smart was unable to earn sufficient to support a wife and family, and we hear of him next in Grub Street, where he picked up a precarious living as a hack writer. Under the pseudonym of "Mary Midnight" he ran *The Old Woman's Magazine*; he also collaborated with his relation, Newbery, who worked him hard and paid him little; there is even a tradition that he let himself out, on a lease of ninety-nine years,

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to drudge for Gardner the bookseller, on a wretched fixed pittance. No wonder that under such acute poverty, darkness once more overshadowed the poet's brain, and that he again found himself in Bedlam.

Here he was visited by Dr. Johnson, who, in speaking to Dr. Burney of the unfortunate poet, said that apparently his mind "had ceased to struggle with the disease; for he grows fat upon it," and whereas formerly his only exercise had been walking to the ale-house, from which place he had to be "carried back," he now took exercise by digging in the garden. Moreover, the doctor was emphatic, that as Smart's delusions did no one any harm—these consisting mainly of begging everyone to kneel down and pray with him, be the place where it might—he had no right to be deprived of his liberty, adding: "I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else." With another of the poet's idiosyncrasies the doctor showed himself also sympathetic: "Another charge was, that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it."

It is said that poor "Kit," being deprived of writing materials, wrote part of his "Song to David" on the walls of his cell, either with a piece of charcoal, or indented with a key. This poem was declared by Dante Rossetti to be "the only great accomplished poem of the last century," but it showed in parts, such marked signs of unbalanced intellect, that it was purposely omitted in the collection made of Smart's works.

After the poet was discharged from Bedlam, we hear that he lived for a time "with very decent people in a house, most delightfully situated, with a terrace that overlooked St. James's Park." What an oasis of peace must this have been to his tortured brain, but further misfortunes overtook him, and, being unable to meet his debts, he was lodged in the King's Bench Prison, where after a brief illness he died. While dragging out

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a wretched existence within the King's Bench, a pitifully small sum was raised by the poet's friends to supplement the meagre prison allowance; and a pathetic little incident tells us of how he begged in the most touching way for a fellow-sufferer "whom I have myself, already, assisted according to my poverty."

In spite of Whitefield's cold-blooded ideas of a help-mate, his despotism and his narrow outlook upon life, there was a certain force in his character which cannot be overlooked, and he was probably sincere in his convictions. So much could hardly be said of his brother preacher, William Huntington. Huntington had sampled many professions before he became a preacher; amongst others he had been a coal-heaver, a hearse-driver, a tramp, and a gentleman's servant engaged at twenty shillings a year, including two coats, two waistcoats, and two hats—the remaining necessary garments to be purchased out of his perquisites. It was, no doubt, this varied knowledge of the world which taught Huntington how to play successfully on the emotions of human nature.

The reputed son of a farmer called Hunt, William, when he was twenty-four, changed his name to Huntington, for having been the parent of an illegitimate child, he hoped thereby to lose his identity. When speaking of this change of name, Huntington maintained that Abraham and other biblical characters had been commanded to change theirs, and that "an addition is no charge, an addition is no robbery." He had even the audacity to declare that in spite of his lapse in virtue, he would hereafter be numbered among those "who are called virgin souls."

The process of "conversion" which Huntington passed through was hastened by the labours of one of Whitefield's most bigoted Calvinists. It was a shock when, after a course of reading, Huntington found that



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only the "predestinated" need expect to enter the Kingdom of Heaven; and it needed a further advance in conversion before he became assured that he, too, was numbered among the elect. It is possible that at this period some moments of genuine conviction were working in the heart of Huntington, but from the time when he became a preacher, egoism swamped every finer instinct.

At first, he combined the duties of preaching with carrying coals on the river at Thames Ditton, for he had now taken unto himself a wife and was desperately poor; but after a while he lived entirely by faith, in other words, on what his followers were pleased to give him. "I found God's promises," he says, "to be the Christian's banknote." Certainly this eventually proved a most lucrative form of living, for gifts of all kinds poured in. Upon one occasion he writes that he is in great need of a new pair of leather "breeches," which word he begs to be excused from using, as it is to be met with in the Scriptures; and when he calls at a shoemaker, a parcel is handed to him containing a note: "Sir, I have sent you a pair of breeches, and I hope they will fit. I beg your acceptance of them; and if they want any alteration, leave in a note what the alteration is, and I will call in a few days and alter them." Happily, however, the garments in question needed no alteration, for Huntington assures the tailor that "They fit very well, which fully convinces me that the same God who moved thy heart to give, guided thy hand to cut."

But embarrassing disclosures of the seduction affair began leaking out; so the preacher confided the history of his indiscretion to a few of the chosen, who stood by him manfully when the storm burst, declaring he had never deceived them regarding that matter. And now Huntington rather naïvely observes that all men are ambitious of adding some letters after their name, and

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that as he cannot afford a D.D., even if he would, nor an M.A.—because of his lack of education—he will add S.S., which to the initiated stands for “Sinner Saved.” Apart from the recent scandal, Huntington had grown tired of Thames Ditton and secretly hankered after London; although he declares that hearing it was a place of evil-doing and evil-thinking, he was at first averse from the idea of preaching there.

Despite, however, its ill-repute, to London he and his family came, in a “post-chaise well filled with children and cats”; and by and by a chapel in Tichfield Street, Oxford Street, was built for him by his enthusiastic flock, which he christened “Providence Chapel.” And once more flowed in numerous gifts: a well-filled tea-chest, a bed and bedstead for the vestry—so that he need not return home in bad weather—a set of china, while one lady presented him with a looking-glass.

But Providence played a low-down trick in causing his “god-child” to be burnt down. Some of the worshippers considered this a judgment for having enclosed the free seats, and “laying out the whole chapel in boxes like an opera house.” They, notwithstanding, collected so goodly a sum, that a much larger chapel was now built which was made over to Huntington, that gentleman being wily enough to decline preaching in it unless this was done. And what with pew-rents, the sale of his writings, etc., he was now able to take a villa at Cricklewood, and drive to and from his chapel in the coach and pair presented to him by his congregation. Truly the earthly pilgrimage of a popular preacher lies through pleasant places.

In course of time, Huntington having buried his first wife, another lady, the widow of Sir James Sanderson, and one of his most fervent disciples, now presented him with her hand.

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Many of his flock came to ask for his spiritual advice. At times more mundane subjects were discussed, as when the preacher tells a certain Mrs. Bell, with whose constant letters he had become more than a little bored, that her headgear with its "preposterous streamers, and its first, second and third tier of curls" does not meet with his approval; he adds, however, that a little more "furnace work" will remedy this, and make her pull down the useless "topsails." As Mrs. Bell was sitting down to write an indignant reply to this onslaught on her embellishments, she fell asleep by the fire; and the candle not only set alight to the lappets of her cap but to some of her hair, causing the good lady to write and assure her pastor that he need have no further fear of seeing either streamers, curls, or topsails again.

It is said that Huntington's preaching was less distinguished by its eloquence than by its vigour; at all times colloquial, it was almost as though he were speaking, while his descriptions were remarkably vivid. With more than a touch of coarseness, he also frequently made such digressions as "Take care of your pockets"; "Wake that snoring sinner"; "Silence that noisy numbskull." But beyond a trick of passing his handkerchief from one hand to another, and fondling his cushion, Huntington was entirely without mannerisms. Uncompromising in his interpretation of the Bible, he denounced everyone who differed from his as "knaves, fools or incarnate devils."

Among those who most boldly denounced this religious humbug, was the charitable-minded Rowland Hill. It is said that he once took up one of Huntington's works with the tongs, and in this manner gave it to his servant to light the fire. Huntington, on his part, declared sarcastically that he had no desire "to take one sheep out of his adversary's fold, nor one he-goat out of his stall."

## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Within a few doors of Rowland Hill's Chapel was the Surrey Theatre, a resort of a very different kind.

It would be impossible to have a more characteristic example of Huntington's colossal vanity than the epitaph of himself which he dictated, space being left for the actual dates :

“ Here lies the coal-heaver, who departed this life [July 1st, 1813,] in the [69th] year of his age, beloved of his God, but abhorred of men. The Omniscient Judge at the Grand Assize shall ratify and confirm this, to the confusion of many thousands; for England and its Metropolis shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.”

At the auction of Huntington's property, which took place after his death, his admirers vied with one another in becoming possessors of some memento of their “ Prophet.” A pair of ordinary spectacles was sold for seven guineas, while an armchair, which was said only to have been worth fifty shillings, fetched sixty guineas.

Though Huntington had, in his youth, carried coals at Thames Ditton, he was not nearly so interesting a person as Thomas Britton, the small-coal seller, who for nearly forty years held concerts of such unrivalled excellence that nobody cared a jot whether he sold coals or whether he didn't.

A native of Northamptonshire, Britton served his apprenticeship with a small-coal dealer in London, who, after the seven years had expired, paid his apprentice a small sum not to set up a rival establishment. In spite of which, having returned to Northampton, where he spent all his money, Britton drifted back to London; and at the rent of four pounds a year he set up in the small-coal line, in a stable at the side of Jerusalem Corner, Clerkenwell. The coals were kept on the



# SURREY THEATRE.

WHICH IS THE BEST PANTOMIME—COME & SEE!

DALBY'S GREAT SURREY SCENIC EFFECTS!

Read what "The TIMES" says of the Surrey Pantomime!

Great as Mr. Shepherd notoriously is in the production of Pantomime, he has undoubtedly outdone all his former efforts this year. As a spectacle, "A Prince of Peas, or Harlequin and Jane Shore," may vie in magnificence and scenic effects with the most celebrated of the Lyceum baroque, while the fun and humour of the comic business would alone insure the success of half-a-dozen pantomimes. Clearly the Management has been deaf to all promptings of economy in putting their Christmas piece on the stage—for beauty and splendour it is a triumph of mechanical effects and gorgeous decoration.

Read what the "SUNDAY TIMES" says of the SURREY PANTOMIME!  
"THE VERY BEST PANTOMIME PRODUCED FOR YEARS!"

NOTHING EVER SEEN LIKE THE SURREY PANTOMIME!

The Entertainments commence, Every Evening, with

## A GRAND DRAMA!!

SUPPORTED BY  
Mr. CRESWICK, Mr. SHEPHERD,  
Mr. J. H. RICHARDS, Mr. H. WIDDICOMB, Mr. C. A. CALVERT  
Mr. VOLLAIRE, Mr. W. MORGAN, Mr. G. YARWOOD, Mr. BUTLER  
Miss MARRIOTT, Miss EMILY SANDERS,  
Miss CONWAY, Miss FANNY YOUNG, Mrs. WOOLIDGE, &c., &c.

## A PRINCE of PEARLS

THE GREAT



PANTOMIME!

OR, HARLEQUIN AND

## JANE SHORE!

The WONDER



OF THE DAY.

Harlequin, — Mr. E. H. KITCHEN. Columbine, — Miss MARIA HERITON  
Clown, — Mr. BUCK, the Acknowledged Best Clown of the Day.  
Pantaloon, Mr. BRADBURY. Sprites, Mr. WRIGHT and Mr. CHADWICK.

NOTICE.—The Performances terminate, Every Evening, by a Quarter past 11.

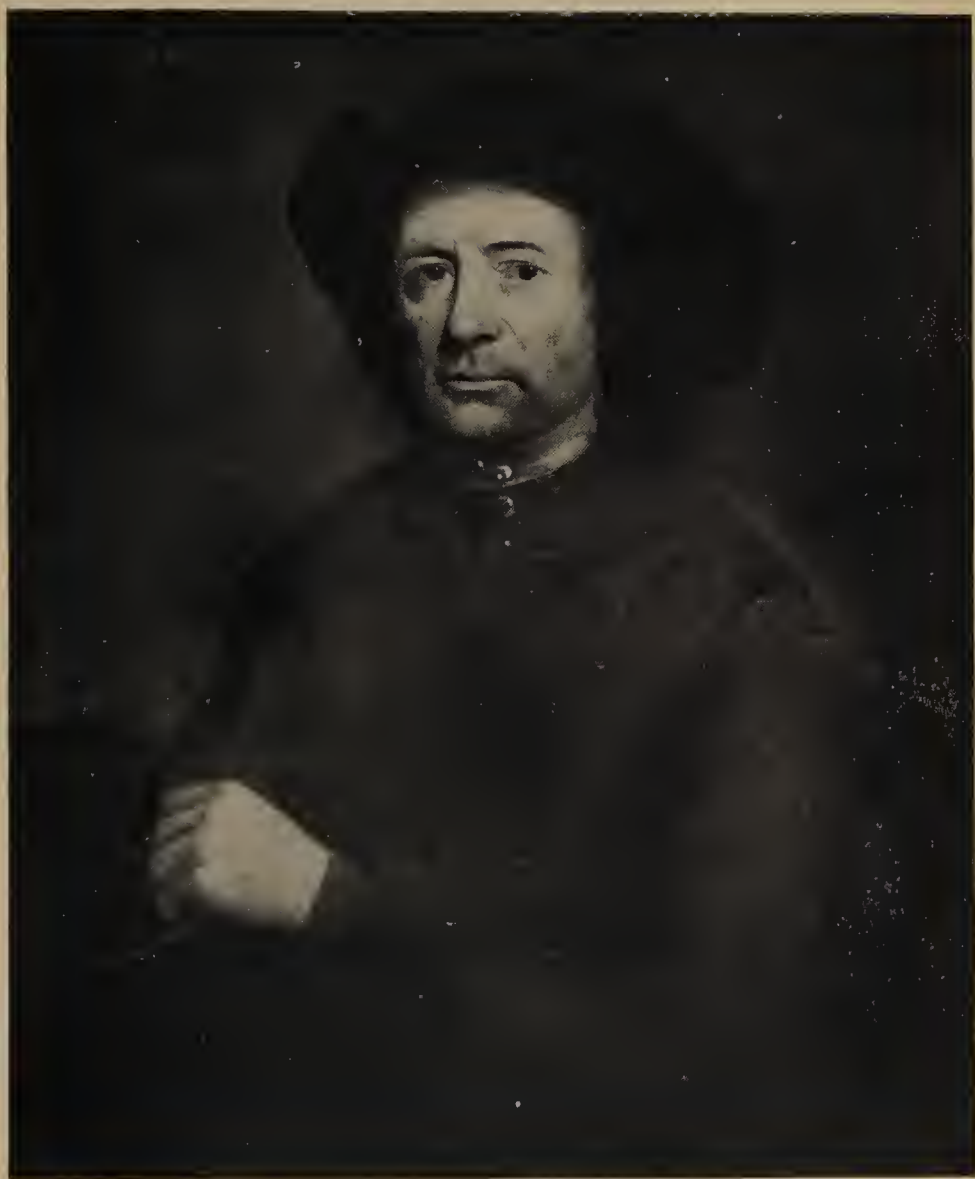
H. Chapman and Co., Printers 5 Shoe Lane, and Peterborough Court, Fleet Street.

## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ground floor, and above, to be reached from the outside by a sort of staircase ladder, which we are told few could ascend except by "crawling," was a long narrow room. Not a luxurious apartment, certainly, for the ceiling was so low that a tall man could only just stand upright. Yet in this room at the top of this perilous staircase, Britton held his Musical Club; every Thursday clambered up many of the most fashionable gentry of the day, amongst others the eccentric Duchess of Queensberry, and all were received by him dressed in his blue smock, while he twisted the measure into the mouth of his sack.

At first no charge was made for the concerts, but after a time the members paid ten shillings a year, while an extra penny secured them a dish of coffee. And who would not pay such a sum to hear the great Handel, or Dr. Pepusch play on the harpsichord, and Banister or Medler perform on the first violin? It is said that Britton also took part in these concerts, and was an excellent performer on the viol de gamba.

In those days, the most distinguished men of letters sought for rare books and manuscripts in the shops of "Little Britain" and Moorfields on Saturday mornings during the winter, when Parliament was not sitting; and foregathered about noon at the shop of Christopher Bateman the bookseller, at the corner of Ave Maria Lane, Paternoster Row. By this time Britton had ended his rounds. Being wholly devoid of all false modesty, he would, grimy as he was, after depositing his sack on the ledge of Mr. Bateman's window, join the literary group, his knowledge of books always securing him a warm welcome. It was as a bibliomaniac that Britton made the acquaintance of that great collector, Harley, Lord Oxford, who presented the world-known Harleian MSS. to the nation. Often, as Britton passed through the streets,



THOMAS BRITON, BY JOHN WOLLASTON.

*National Portrait Gallery, London.*





## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

people would point him out to some stranger in the following words: "There goes the famous Small-Coal-Man, who is a Lover of Learning, a Performer of Music, and a Companion for Gentlemen."

Not only was Britton an authority on books and music, but under the instruction of Dr. Garenciers, who was in attendance at the French Embassy, he acquired a knowledge of chemistry, and at a trifling expense he built himself what was described by Hearne as "an amazing laboratory." This ingenious invention so delighted a certain Welsh gentleman, that he insisted on carrying Britton back with him to Wales, for the purpose of constructing another one after the same design, for which he paid him liberally. (This study of chemistry, and more especially the mysteries of the laboratory, probably started the absurd report that Britton dabbled in magic and other unholy arts.

The cause of Britton's death was a tragic one; he had always been a superstitious man, and this trait made him an easy victim for the practical joke played on him by a blacksmith, called Honeyman. Honeyman, an excellent ventriloquist, had already nearly frightened the celebrated Dr. Sacheverell out of his wits, and was now induced to try his art on the unsuspecting coalman. Speaking in a deep and far-away voice, he warned Britton that he would die in a few hours unless he fell on his knees and repeated the Lord's Prayer. Poor Britton, who had probably been a good deal less of a sinner than most people, no doubt thought that he was being addressed by the Evil One, and in abject terror he fell on his knees. The shock proved so great that he took to his bed, and a few days later he died. His funeral at St. James's churchyard was attended by a large number of people, but there seems to be no sort of monument to mark the vault in which he was buried.

Britton left at his death about fourteen hundred

## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

books, twenty-seven fine musical instruments, and some rare manuscripts. A picture of this simple "small-coal" dealer, wearing his blue smock, was painted by his friend Wollaston, and is to be seen in the National Portrait Gallery.

## CHAPTER II

Roger Payne—Mrs. Cornelys—Lady Cork—Tommy Lowe—  
Henry Carey.

THE delight of all bibliomaniacs—as Britton was of all musicians—was Roger Payne, the book-binder, nor had his patrons any fear that the inside of his work would be sacrificed to the beautiful designs of the cover; Roger was too great an artist to commit such a blunder.

He is said to have amused himself, as a child, by stripping the bark from the oak or beech trees in Windsor Forest, and fashioning it into the form of a “boke.” Some years later we hear of him at Eton, where it is said that a well-known bookseller of the college gave him employment. But London seemed to Roger a far more desirable place than Eton, and in course of time to London he came, and became apprenticed to a book-binder. His master was, however, rough and dominating, and Roger far from adaptable, the obvious result being that the two fell out.

With no money and no friends the young man would now have been in a sorry plight had not his namesake, Thomas Payne, the famous bookseller, always known as “honest Tom Payne,” come to the rescue, and soon afterwards enabled him to set up for himself. Now, indeed, had come the opportunity of his life; but Roger had, unfortunately, acquired too great a liking for “barley-broth”; when he had earned a few pounds he lived “jovially,” but when this was not forthcoming he well-nigh starved. In one of his account books,

## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

which is still in existence, may be found the following entry :

For bacon ... 1 halfpenny,  
For liquor ... 1 shilling.

Moreover, we hear that Roger was a very "naughty" man, for, disdaining the most elementary conventionalities of life, he preferred garments which were ragged and dirty to those which were decent and comfortable, while his workshop was so unsavoury a den, that not even the most enthusiastic of his clients could visit him. A story is told of how he once forced himself, disreputable-looking and unkempt, into the presence of Lady Spencer—about some business connected with her husband's library—just as she was dressing for Court. Lady Spencer, apparently, showed no embarrassment at so disconcerting a visitor; but her ladyship's French hairdresser exclaimed in horror: "Ah Dieu! mais comment donc, est-ce que c'est ainsi qu'on se présente dans ce pays-ci dans un cabinet de toilette!"

Roger's *chef-d'œuvre* was a large paper copy of *Æschylus* which he bound for Lord Spencer, and which contained the original drawings by Flaxman; for this masterpiece he charged Lord Spencer sixteen pounds seven shillings. But apart from designing bindings, Roger was a "docteur" of old books, and in his binding of *Æschylus* he gives the following bill:

"Bound in very best manner, sew'd with strong Silk, every Sheet round every Band, not false Bands; the Back lined with Russia Leather, cutt Exceeding Large; Finished in the most Magnificent Manner, Em-borderd with *Ernaine* expressive of The High-Rank of The Noble Patroness of the Designs, The other Parts Finished in the most elegant Taste with small Tool Gold Borders Studded with Gold; and small Tool Plates of the most exact Work, Measured with the Compasses.



## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

It takes a great deal of Time, marking out the different Measure-ments; preparing the Tools, and making out New Patterns. The Book finished in compartments with parts of Gold Studded Work. All the Tools except Studded points are obliged to be worked off plain first—and afterwards the Gold laid on and Worked off again. And this Gold Work requires Double Gold, being on Rough Grained Morocco, The Impressions of the Tools must be fitted and covered at the bottom with Gold to prevent flaws and cracks .£12 12 0

Fine drawing paper for Inlaying the designs . . . . .	0	5	6
Finest pickt Lawn paper for Interleaving the Designs . . . . .	0	1	8
One yard and a half of Silk . . . . .	0	10	6
Inlaying the Designs at 8d. each, 32 Designs . . . . .	1	1	4
Mr. Morton adding borders to the Drawings . . . . .	1	16	0
	<hr/>		
	£16	7	0
	<hr/>		

In later days Roger took as assistant in his work a certain Richard Wier, but Wier too loved "barley-broth," and violent quarrels ensued, in which Wier, being the stronger man of the two, sometimes gave his master a sound thrashing. But Roger showed no resentment to the pommellings he received, and undoubtedly Wier was an excellent workman. He had, moreover, espoused a dame equally skilled in the renovating of old books. After his death, which followed closely on Payne's, Mrs. Wier was employed in the Register Office at Edinburgh to clean and repair the books, parchments, etc., of these two men. Her work was so well done that a copy of the *Faite of Arms and Chivalrye*, printed by Caxton and bound by Payne,

## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

was sold by auction at the Roxburgh sale, and fetched the high figure of three hundred and thirty-six pounds.

For some years before his death Roger led a wretched life of poverty, and was entirely dependent upon the charity of his generous namesake, who also fulfilled the last office in his power—that of having his unfortunate friend decently buried.

While Payne was starving and imbibing “barley-broth,” it is more than likely that some of his patrons were disporting themselves at Vauxhall, or the Cremorne Gardens; or at Carlisle House, Soho Square, where Mrs. Teresa Cornelys, the “Circe of Soho” as she was sometimes called, organized a series of magnificent balls, concerts and masquerades. Mrs. Cornelys, the daughter of a German actor, had been for some years a public singer, but her voice was harsh and her morals shady. After travelling in many countries, where she was known under different names, she arrived in London and purchased Carlisle House, and it was at this stage of her career that the fashionable world of London became aware of her existence.

The first meeting of the “Society,” as the subscribers to her entertainments called themselves, took place in 1760, and three years later Mrs. Cornelys gave a ball to the upper servants of her patrons. From that time her assemblies became a greater rage than ever, and were attended by most of the élite. At one of the masquerades Miss Monckton, who afterwards became Lady Cork, was dressed as an Indian Sultana, covered with jewels to the amount of thirty thousand pounds. Among other characters was a representation of Adam, in flesh-coloured silk, wearing the proverbial apron of fig-leaves, in company with the Duchess of Bolton; Death, in a white shroud, bearing his coffin and epitaph; and the Duchess of Kingston once appeared in the character of Iphigenia, “in a state almost ready,” as Horace Walpole sarcastically remarked, “for the

# VAUXHALL

MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 1836,

IN CELEBRATION OF

THE BIRTH DAY OF HIS MOST  
GRACIOUS MAJESTY,  
THE PATRON OF THESE GARDENS.

At this Joyous Anniversary, the whole strength of the Establishment is always brought into action; but on this occasion the ILLUMINATIONS—The FIRE WORKS—The PERFORMANCES of the CELEBRATED RAVEL FAMILY—and, in fact, every department of the Entertainments will be found to surpass, by far, those of any former Gala. The limits of this bill will only allow a slight sketch of the arrangements for the Evening.

## THE ILLUMINATIONS.

The "COMPLIMENTARY TARTAN" will be the *chef d'œuvre* of Illuminations; it will be a Colossal Representation of "ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON," 40 Feet in height, and composed entirely of Lamps.

The Illuminations of the

### NEW ITALIAN WALK

Will be entirely changed, and present a complete Fairy Land.—The Walk is 600 Feet in length, and contains 300 trees, every one of which will be hung with variegated Lamps.

The HERMIT WALK—THE KING'S WALK—and those usually called the DARK WALKS—will all have a new and varied style of Illumination.

At the lowest calculation, the extra Piece in preparation for the above Evening, will contain 50,000 Lamps.

M. JAVELIE, the First Tight-Rope Dancer in the World, and MADEMOISELLE RAVEL, will perform with and without the Balancier.

A CONCERT will be given; and the COLDSTREAM and QUADRILLE BANDS attend.

THE DIORAMIC PICTURE of THE PROPOSED NEW HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, after the Designs of C. BARRY, Esq. will be exhibited after the Fire Works.



### THE RAVEL FAMILY

This most astonishing Family will perform their celebrated Ballet Pantomime of "LE VOL AU VENT," in which M. GAERIEL RAVEL will play the principal Character: he has also consented to give his wonderful STILT DANCE, in the character of POLICHINELLO.—This is the first time that M. GAERIEL has ever played the above two characters on the same Evening; and the great exertion required, renders it impossible for him to repeat them.

## THE FIRE WORKS,

(ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF VAUXHALL,) will, on this Evening, be  
**UNEQUALLED.**

THE TERRIFIC ASCENT ON TWO ROPES, will take place during the Exhibitions; and which will terminate by a GRAND FEU DE JOIE, in honor of THE KING: consisting of Nine successive Flights of Rockets, each containing 100, and a Tenth Flight of 150 Colored Rockets.—The effect of this *Feu de Joie* will surpass anything ever witnessed in this Country.

DOORS OPEN AT HALF-PAST EIGHT.  
Admission, FOUR SHILLINGS.

# MONDAY

AUGUST 22.

ROYAL NIGHT



## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

sacrifice." The following is a good description of the elaborate arrangements necessary for such entertainments :

" Mrs. Cornelys humbly hopes that the Nobility and Gentry, etc., will be pleased to order that their Coachmen and Chairmen will prudently bring them to the door, for fear of breaking either coach or chairs, as she takes as much care as is in her power to prevent any accident that may happen. Also the Nobility and Gentry, etc., Coaches and Hackney Chairs are to stay at the door in the Square, all towards the side of Greek Street, to let the passage be free for the Ladies' Chairs to go to the door in Sutton Street. And she hopes that the Chairmen will make no disturbance. She also requests that gentlemen should not enter the promenades of her house 'with boots.' "

In another of her advertisements, Mrs. Cornelys promises her patrons " tea below stairs and ventilators above," and doubtless there was liquid refreshment of a stronger nature to be procured elsewhere : admission to these entertainments varied from two to five guineas. The establishment of Carlisle House was on a magnificent scale ; Casanova says that Mrs. Cornelys kept three secretaries, a female confidante, a dumb attendant (who we can well imagine must have been an invaluable asset), and thirty-two ordinary servants.

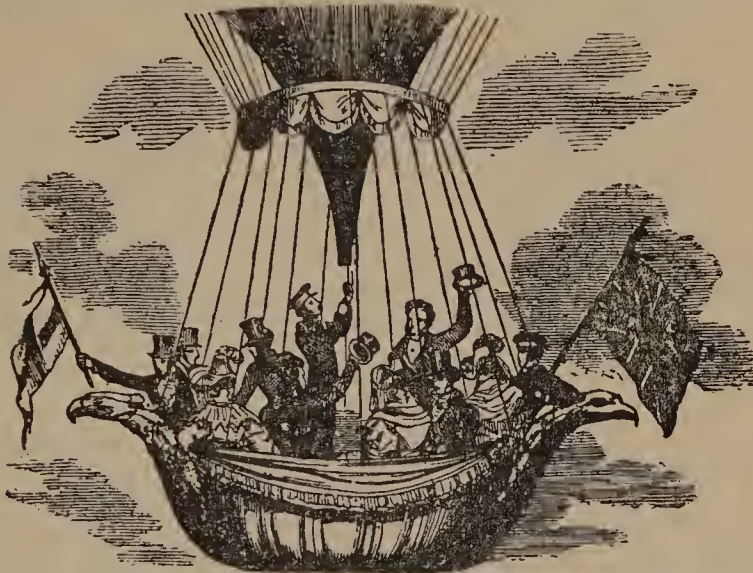
But those days of prosperity were drawing to a close. After the first " Harmonic Meeting " at Carlisle House, part of the profits were distributed among the poor of the parish : the proprietors of the Italian Opera, who had long been jealous of the rival attractions at Carlisle House, now pounced down, declaring their rights had been infringed ; the principal singer was taken into custody, and the " Harmonic Meetings " came to an untimely end.

A more serious charge was now made against Mrs. Cornelys—that of keeping a disorderly house, for which

# Cremorne Gardens

KING'S ROAD, CHELSEA.

## ANOTHER BALLOON. GREEN AND THE GREAT NASSAU.



**A Large Party will ascend with Mr. Green, on Monday next, JUNE 29th, 1846, at 7 o'clock in the evening. This will be the grandest affair of the Season.—No end of Amusements.—A New Ballet by Children.—Tempests of Fireworks.**

Leave the dull and murky town,  
Unto Chelsea hurry down ;  
See the antique Veteran, GREEN,  
Quit the gay and festive scene ;  
See him RISE ABOVE HIS RACE,  
On his aerial STEEPLE CHASE.  
The Nassau is the Great Balloon,  
In which he had, beneath the moon,  
Across the British Channel wide—  
A very comfortable ride.  
Then haste to Cremorne, haste away—  
A SHILLING's all you have to pay—  
HALF-PRICE for CHILDREN—Oh! PAPA,  
Bring the young ones, and MAMA.

The Magnificent Grounds, Park, Maze, Shrubberies—the Banqueting Hall, its superb and lofty Galleries—the newly-erected Lavender Bowers, and the Million and One natural attractions of this truly Noble Domain, are thrown open to the Public, for Promenade and Inspection, every Sunday, at Half-past Four o'clock. No charge is made for admission, but every visitor is expected to take a Refreshment Card to the amount of Sixpence.

N.B.—The Public are most respectfully requested not to pick the Flowers, or tread on the borders of the beds.

**PUBLIC DINNERS.**—Mr. ELLIS begs to direct the attention of gentlemen having to cater for Club Dinners and Annual Celebrations, to a view of the newly-erected Banqueting Hall, in the Park of Cremorne, capable of dining 2,000 persons. Also, to the superbly-furnished and well-appointed Rooms in the Mansion, for large and small Dining Parties. Everything on a scale of excellence and economy unmatched in the history of modern gastronomy. Cremorne-on-Thames can be reached from any part of Town by Steam-boat for Fourpence; Cremorne-on-Road by Omnibus for Sixpence.

Dancing every Evening at Six o'clock. A first-rate Band, conducted by M. Laurent, junior.

General Steam-Printing Company, 69, West-street, Smithfield.

## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

she was fined fifty pounds. There is reason to believe the accusation was not altogether unfounded; in any case the entertainments suggested a brawl; for we hear that after supper at these masquerades a general pandemonium took place, and the noisy crowd outside were pelted with the remains of the supper, and half-empty bottles. The Queen of Beauty and Fashion at these orgies was Miss Gertrude Conway, afterwards married to George Villiers, Earl of Grandison. Among this lady's eccentricities was the giving of dresses and "tambour-waistcoats" as undress livery to her servants, and the grandeur of her chairmen, who always wore large plumes in their hats.

Further troubles now gathered round the hapless Mrs. Cornelys, for "The Coterie" and the splendid palace of "The Pantheon" held serious counter-attractions; her expenses were, of course, enormous, and her fickle patrons deserted her for these newer places of amusement.

In the list of bankrupts in *The London Gazette* of November, 1772, we read the name of "Teresa Cornelys," and in the following month Carlisle House and all its contents were offered for auction. Three years later, however, we hear of Mrs. Cornelys being given the sole management of the supper and decorations of a fête at Ranelagh, for which she received seven hundred guineas, out of which she must have made considerable profits, for it was reported that the food was inferior and the wine scarce.

From that time Mrs. Cornelys rapidly disappeared from public life, and we next hear of her as "a vendor of asses' milk" at Knightsbridge. But even now, at her advanced age, the old lady made one last effort to be recognized by Society, and spoke of organizing a Breakfast under the patronage of the Prince of Wales. The small room selected for this festivity showed the decay of her once artistic sense, for the ceiling and walls

## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

were profusely decorated with gaudy pieces of many-coloured glass. It is hardly necessary to say that the banquet never came off. Now that her power of being able to contribute to the amusement of Society had ceased, Society had no further use for her, and the last days of her life were passed in the Fleet Prison.

After Carlisle House had been pulled down a curious relic was found, a small copper-plate upon which was the following inscription :

“ Not vain but grateful.  
In honour of the Society  
And my first protectress  
Honble Mrs. Elizabeth Chudleigh  
Is laid this first stone  
Of this edifice  
June 19, 1761  
by me  
Teresa Cornelys.”

Mary Monckton, afterwards Lady Cork, who was, as we have heard, a patron of Mrs. Cornelys in her palmy days at Carlisle House, was celebrated alike for her wit and her eccentricities.

Her mother's house in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, was a centre for all the *beaux esprits* of the day, but it was the daughter rather than the mother who was the presiding genius of these brilliant gatherings. Here might be seen Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fanny Burney and many other persons of distinction. Miss Monckton also delighted in surrounding herself with all sorts of oddities and cranks; here, too, the “ Blue-Stocking ” contingent mustered strong, and Dr. Johnson used to say that Miss Monckton had the finest *bit of blue* at her house.

The “ immaculate Fanny,” as Fanny Burney was known to the gay world of her time, gives us an account of one of these assemblies. Miss Monckton was at that time between thirty and forty, and is described as



## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

being "very short, very fat, but handsome, fantastically dressed, rouged not unbecomingly." And we hear, moreover, that she was "evidently and palpably desirous of gaining notice and attention."

Ceremony in Charles Street was apparently quite a secondary consideration, for on the arrival of visitors—who were unannounced—the hostess *ex officio* only turned her head and nodded a "how de do," and the guests found seats for themselves as best they might. When, however, the conversation of the evening began in earnest, it was a very different matter, and from that moment Miss Monckton assumed a masterly hand; on no account were her guests then permitted to sit as they chose, if their grouping was in a circle, as according to her views nothing was so detrimental to conversation. Chairs were therefore shifted about, and people arranged themselves in little groups.

Although, no doubt, Miss Monckton could count many suitors among her admirers, she did not marry until she was forty; her parties then became a greater rage than ever. At one of these, nothing would satisfy the hostess but that Mr. Thomas Moore, who at that time was at the height of his popularity, should give a reading of *Comus*. Unluckily Mr. Moore could not see her suggestion in the same light as herself: he was particularly engaged—moreover he had an exceeding bad cold. For the moment Lady Cork was nonplussed; but she was a lady of resource, and after a conversation with "Monk" Lewis, she left the room; and when she reappeared she carried in her hand a large Burgundy pitch plaster, with which she declared she would cure the poet's cold; who in spite of strenuous efforts at escape was finally cornered. What means the poet used to soften the heart of his hostess, history disdains to relate; it is only known that he eventually escaped the "plaster" peril.

In her later days Lady Cork suffered from klepto-



## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

mania, and when she dined out, her host would invariably, with the greatest tact, leave a pewter fork or spoon for her to take home in her muff. Her other eccentricities naturally increased with age; once, after a breakfast-party, she calmly took possession of a friend's carriage, in which she drove the whole afternoon, and upon encountering the much injured owner, she merely remarked that the step was inconveniently high for her short legs. Another time, when calling upon Roger, the poet, she found him out, and proceeded to carry off some of his choicest flowers; it was nearly a year before she was received back into the poet's favour.

But although Lady Cork's vagaries increased with years, her powers of memory remained unimpaired; when she was over eighty she recited half a book of Pope's *Iliad*, and when she was ninety-four her vitality was so great, that until within a few days of her death she rose every morning at six, and dined out every day that she was not receiving friends at home. At one of these parties we catch a glimpse of a frail and dilapidated old figure, dressed in white, and wearing a white bonnet on her head, which she kept on during dinner. A boy page, dressed in green livery and a cap ornamented by a high plume of black feathers, was in attendance. While still clinging to her little vanities, and seductive though she found the world even to the end, Lady Cork always declared that she was ready for Death, although she disliked to see him coming.

It is said that Dickens took his character of "Mrs. Leo Hunter" in *Pickwick* from this remarkable old lady, and "Lady Drum" in Thackeray's *Great Hogarty Diamond*, and Lord Beaconsfield's "Lady Bellairs" in *Henrietta Temple*, are taken from the same model.

Although no rival to the brilliant entertainments of Mrs. Cornelys, another fashionable place of resort was the Marylebone Gardens. Of this resort Pepys

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writes in his famous diary: "Then we abroad to Marrowbone, and there walked in the Gardens; the first time I ever was there, and a pretty place it is."

For five years Tommy Lowe, the singer and actor, was proprietor of these gardens. Lowe had once possessed a remarkably fine tenor voice, but owing to his lack of musical knowledge, he could never be safely trusted with anything more ambitious than a ballad; otherwise, when Handel quarrelled with Beard, it is said that he intended to have engaged Lowe for the oratorios. As this stroke of good fortune did not, however, come to pass, Lowe thought he saw his way to making a good thing out of the management of the Marylebone Gardens. So he engaged popular singers for the concerts, and we hear that on Sunday afternoons after five, "genteel" people were allowed to walk in the gardens free of charge; refreshments were provided; while Miss Trusler, so noted for her cake-making, informed the "Nobility and Gentry" that her cakes and almond cheesecakes should never be made with any other than loaf sugar and the best Epping butter—which announcement was, no doubt, a source of vast content to the jaded appetites of these ladies and gentlemen of quality.

This Miss Trusler seems to have had a particularly shrewd brother, the Reverend John Trusler, who started life as an apothecary; then, dispensing with any College training, he took "orders" and became a curate in London. But his commercial instinct being keen, he soon realized that he could make a far better thing out of "sermon-mongering"; in other words, writing sermons for such of his brother parsons who had not the whit to compose them for themselves. In those days such a thing was looked upon as something of a scandal, and Cowper satirized the Reverend John in *The Task*:

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“ He grinds divinity of other days  
Down into modern use, transforms old print  
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes  
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.  
Are there who purchase of the Doctor’s ware?  
Oh, name it not in Gath. It cannot be,  
That grave and learned clerks should need such aid.  
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,  
Assuming thus a rank unknown before—  
Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the Church.”

This “dry-nurse” of the Church, moreover, brought out the morning and evening services so punctuated, that the unenlightened might know exactly, how they should be delivered. For this he has also been satirized by Cowper :

“ He teaches those to read, whom schools dismiss’d,  
And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,  
And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer  
The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.”

But to return to Tommy Lowe; he was at first well pleased with his new enterprise as manager of the Marylebone Gardens, and we hear of his driving there in his carriage, a large trunk stowed away at the back, in which to deposit his profits. We hear also of his raising a subscription to enable some unfortunate fellow to drive a small chaise, drawn by four muzzled mastiffs, in which children might, for a halfpenny, ride from a pond near Portland Chapel to the Farthing Pie House. Whether this was an equally satisfactory arrangement so far as the mastiffs were concerned is open to doubt.

Yet, in spite of all the attractions of the Marylebone Gardens, they had their drawbacks. Undesirable persons not infrequently invaded this select resort, and highwaymen became such a menace that Lowe offered a reward of ten guineas “for the apprehension of any highwayman found on the road to the Gardens.” Many

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years previously Dick Turpin had forced his way into them, and had, to the scandal of all present, boldly imprinted a kiss on the cheek of Mrs. Fountayne, the handsome wife of the Marylebone schoolmaster. And when that lady showed herself highly incensed at such an unwarranted liberty, Dick coolly remarked: "Be not alarmed, Madam, you can now boast that you have been kissed by Dick Turpin."

In addition to the chance of encountering highwaymen, the élite were possibly offended by the Sabbatarians putting a stop to their tea-drinking at the Gardens on Sunday afternoons. But whatever the reasons, poor Tommy Lowe found himself involved in heavy losses; a rainy season brought matters to a climax; after which he resigned the proprietorship of the Gardens. From that time Lowe went steadily down in the world, and his voice was so much impaired that he was glad to take any chance engagement at such places as Finch's Grotto Gardens or Sadler's Wells.

We catch a last glimpse of this singer coming out of a butcher's shop, carrying a piece of meat in a large blue and white checked handkerchief; but there probably came a day when Lowe could not afford the luxury of meat, for he is said to have died in great poverty.

Among the luminaries of Sadler's Wells was the musician and miscellaneous writer, Henry Carey, one of his compositions being that well-known little ballad *Sally in our Alley*. The origin of this song was the holiday of a shoemaker's apprentice, who treated his sweetheart to a round of entertainments which included a view of Bedlam, the puppet shows, the flying chairs—better known as the "ups and downs"—and a stroll through Moorfields. The lovers ended up their holiday at the Farthing Pie House, where the lady was feasted upon buns, cheesecakes, stuffed beef and bottled beer. Little did they guess that all through the day's excur-



## **To the Public.**

The Proprietors anxious to facilitate the Amusements of their numerous Juvenile Friends (at home for the Midsummer Holidays) have availed themselves of a variety of the most splendid Novelties that have been presented for many years, they also take the earliest opportunity of forwarding the following Admissions, each of which will admit an unlimited number of Persons.

### **SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE.**

**Admit the Bearer & Party to  
THE BOXES,**

**On payment of 1s. 6d. each Person,**

**From June 21 to July 31, 1830.**

Not admitted after Half-past Seven,  
nor unless suitably attired.

*J. Dayus.*

The very splendid Melo-Drama of "*Robert the Devil*," Duke of Normandy, has been prepared here with that degree of magnificence and Scenic effect for which this Theatre has ever been considered pre-eminent.

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*J. Dayus.*

During the Holidays, the Comic Pantomime of "*THE SORCERERS THREE GOLDEN Hairs, or Harlequin Prince of China*," will be performed first, alternately, with other equally effective Favorites—Boxes will be set apart for the reception of Juvenile Parties.

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nor unless suitably attired.

*J. Dayus.*

The whole of the Amusements will be so arranged as to conclude before 11 o'clock, to enable the hundreds of Children (that invariably visit this favorite Theatre at this period of the year) to retire at a reasonable hour. One of the above Admissions will admit any number, the others may be retained by the Party for any Evening they may feel disposed to visit the Theatre:--(Each Order is transferable.) Boxes and Places should be previously secured at the Box Office, open from 10 till 4.

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sion they had been followed at a discreet distance by Carey.

Apart from several burlesque and dramatic pieces, it was long believed that Carey was also the author of our National Anthem, but it has now been traced to be of much earlier date. It first became popular during the early successes of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, and was at that time introduced upon the stage both at Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres.

Carey was the illegitimate son of Lord Halifax; his mother is believed to have been a school teacher: he had also experienced the drudgery of teaching; for at one time his principal means of livelihood was teaching music in small boarding schools, or in families of the middle class. Little seems known of this miscellaneous writer beyond the fact that he was often in great straits, and that while he was the best of companions, his humour entirely lacked the coarseness so typical of those times.

It would seem, however, that some secret trouble preyed upon his mind; maybe he realized that he was a failure, for men respect success, occasionally even fallen success, but the weak who fall out call forth only contempt. Maybe he troubled sorely over his granddaughter, Nance, the disreputable and heartless mother of Edmund Kean, the famous actor. Anyway, be the cause what it might, there came a day when poor Carey could no longer face life, and hanged himself in his house in Warner Street, Cold Bath Fields, a farthing only being found in his pocket.

### CHAPTER III

Samuel Foote—Mrs. Macaulay—Dr. Graham—James Gillray.

A WIT, whose biting satire made him almost as great a terror to his friends as to his enemies, was Samuel Foote, the famous actor and playwright. It is true that upon one occasion we hear of his being seized by a fit of compunction and cursing his own love of ridicule, when told that his friend Dr. Kennedy, whom he was about to satirize in one of his plays, had met with a serious accident.

This Dr. Kennedy adopted an original way of bringing himself into notice. At least three times a week he went to the theatre, and on these evenings a confidential agent drove up in a smart livery to a theatre where he knew the doctor was not to be found, and was given leave to call out between the acts, "Dr. Kennedy." In the meantime the same farce was being acted in the theatre where the doctor was really present, who, seated in the front row, immediately rose, and, after bowing on all sides, took a rapid departure, while the ladies whispered to one another: "Bless me, that Dr. Kennedy has half the practice in town."

But Foote's contrition in regard to the doctor's accident was short-lived, and we hear of his perpetrating a most atrocious witticism at the expense of his own wife. Separated for some years from this lady, when he became settled at Blackheath a sudden whim

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seized him to send for her. He accordingly begged Costello, an actor who prided himself on his skill as a charioteer, to drive her to his house in a one-horse chaise. Now Costello may have excelled as an actor, but he certainly did not excel as a driver, for the carriage was overturned, and the unhappy Mrs. Foote fell upon some gravel, her face being so disfigured that to hide the damage she was obliged to wear a veil. Some friends had been invited that evening, and Mrs. Foote had hardly time to explain the reason of her wearing a veil, when her husband, losing all sense of humanity, pulled it aside, saying he would show the company "a map of the world"; then, pointing to several bruises, he said: "There is the Yellow Ganges, here is the Red Sea," and after some equally heartless remarks, concluded by touching her forehead and observing: "Here are the rocks of Scilly."

Foote always showed his most objectionable side where his wife was concerned. Even after the death of that much tried lady, we hear of his saying that he had been searching the whole town for a second-hand coffin. The servants being present, this remark was apparently made for the sole purpose of making them laugh, a species of amusement in which he delighted; and his object achieved, he spent the rest of the day in the best of spirits. Yet the man who sinned against every law of good taste had many admirers; even Dr. Johnson, whom Foote called "a learned Hottentot," allowed that Sam was "a splendid villain."

The actor came of an old Cornish family. Educated at Worcester Grammar School, he seems to have taken a leading part in all the school rebellions—the "barrings-out," etc.; it is said that he even attempted to manufacture an artificial earthquake for the edification of his friends. And later on at Oxford, he incurred the displeasure of the authorities by driving in company with a few choice spirits, a coach and six grey horses



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through the streets, attended by two footmen. Another time he tied a wisp of hay to the bell-rope of the college chapel, which delicate morsel attracted the attention of some cattle who were frequently turned into the lane at night, the result being that the bell rang so often and so violently that it awoke the whole college. Dr. Gower, the provost, seeing something moving in the dark, seized hold of what turned out to be the horns of an unlucky cow, while the sexton with equal valour caught hold of its tail; and both held on manfully until lights were produced, when to the great amusement of those assembled the identity of the transgressor was revealed.

Later on we hear of Foote as a student at the Temple, where he was recognized as a young blood of unusual ability. He was no less distinguished for his wild extravagance, and it was to escape from persistent creditors that he entered the theatrical profession. But it was neither in tragedy nor yet in comedy that the actor acquired the success for which he was afterwards so famous, but by striking out a line of his own, and combining the parts of actor and author.

To tread warily, however, was not one of Sam's strong points, and in his play *The Diversions of the Morning*, so many well-known people were ridiculed, as well as the best actors, that it gave much offence. To make matters worse, rival managers added their grievances, and taking advantage of an Act of Parliament for limiting the number of theatres, a body of police was sent to stop the performance.

But Foote was not easily baffled, and instead of advertising *The Diversions of the Morning*, he eluded the law by sending out the following: "Mr. Foote's compliments to his friends and the public, and hopes for the honour of their *drinking tea* with him, at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, every morning at playhouse prices."

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He had not miscalculated the effect of this advertisement; crowds of inquisitive people arrived, burning with curiosity to know whether they were actually to drink tea, or whether there was to be a kind of "tea-table dialogue," and the longer they waited the greater became their curiosity. At last, however, the manager appeared and announced that "as he was training some young performers for the stage, he would, with their permission (whilst *tea* was *getting ready*), proceed with his instructions." This joke proved a most profitable one, and the "teas" were attended throughout the season by crowded audiences.

Before long, Foote was once more engaged in a new feud, this time with no less a personage than the celebrated Duchess of Kingston. In this affair he does not appear in a very commendable light, for there seems little doubt that in one of his chronic states of impecuniosity, he threatened that, unless the Duchess paid him a certain sum of money (one authority says the price demanded was two thousand pounds), he would publish his play *The Trip to Calais*, in which she would appear in the unflattering character of Lady Kitty Crocodile. A cataract of letters now ensued;—biting sarcasms on the part of Foote;—injured innocence on the part of the Duchess.

Some extracts from these letters are worth mention. One in particular from the Duchess, in which she speaks of being "clothed in my innocence as in a coat of mail, I am proof against a host of foes. . . . I will keep the *pity* you send, until the morning you are turned off; when I will return it by a Cupid with a box of lip-salve, and a choir of Choristers shall chant a stave to your requiem."

Foote's answer is scathing: he is "happy to hear that your robe of innocence is in such perfect repair; I was afraid it might be a little the worse for wearing. May it hold out to keep your Grace warm the next

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winter." He then proceeds to thank "her Grace" for her intended present, but adds: "where will your Grace get the Cupid to bring me the lip-salve? That family, I am afraid, has long quitted your service." [The Duchess was hardly wise to cross swords with so brilliant a wit as Foote, who had undoubtedly the advantage in this correspondence. He was, however, compelled to weed out the objectionable passages, and the play was brought out the following year under the new title of *The Capuchin*.

As a tenant, Foote must have been singularly undesirable; we hear of his taking a furnished house, and on his cook's complaining there was no rolling-pin he replied: "No? [Then bring me a saw and I will make one," which he did, out of one of the mahogany bed-posts. And, later on, a demand being made for a coal-scuttle, the actor found a drawer from a curious Japan chest was the very substitute he desired. To his landlord's expostulations and threats of calling down the law on his head, Foote coolly threatened to caricature him, and the landlord retired, discomforted and baffled.

For those who believe in a righteous judgment overtaking sinners, Foote is an awe-inspiring example; for after turning into burlesque a worthy printer, whose only peculiarity was the loss of one of his limbs, Foote met with the same misfortune. The accident happened when he was out hunting with the Duke of York, although Foote had as little idea of riding as his friend, Costello, had of driving. In a fit of vanity, however, he declared that: "although he generally preferred the luxury of a post-chaise, he could ride as well as most men he ever knew." But he paid dearly for his folly, for he was almost immediately thrown, his leg fractured, and finally amputated. Foote certainly showed great pluck on this occasion, declaring that he would rather have one good leg than "Lord Spindle's two drum-

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sticks," and with the help of a cork one, he acted as energetically as before. Moreover, when some reference was made to his sham leg, he wittily exclaimed to the speaker: "Make no allusion to my weakest part. Did I ever attack your head?"

In a correspondence between Foote and his mother, we get a very human touch of the good comradeship which existed between them. Perhaps their mutual love of squandering money was the bond of sympathy, for although an heiress when she married, Mrs. Foote was often in great financial embarrassment. The following must have been written on one of these occasions:

"DEAR SAM,—I am in prison for debt. Come and visit your loving

"MOTHER"

to which her son replied:

"DEAR MOTHER,—So am I, which prevents his duty being paid to his loving Mother by her affectionate Son  
SAM FOOTE.

"P.S.—I have sent my Attorney to visit you, in the meantime let us hope for better days."

Accused of a crime which was proved to be false, Foote took the matter so much to heart that he never recovered from the slander, and had scarce passed the prime of life when he was carried by torchlight to the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, and there laid to rest.

One of the numerous victims of Foote's satires was Mrs. Macaulay, the celebrated historian. When the title of her work *Loose Thoughts on Literary Property* was criticized, he declared that he saw no objection to the name; it was, on the contrary, highly desirable to be rid of loose thoughts.



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There was little false modesty about Mrs. Macaulay; while writing her *History of England* she paid a visit to the British Museum, and asked Dr. Birch, who seems at that time to have had charge of the manuscripts, to let her see certain papers which were important for her work. Dr. Birch, knowing the contents of these particular letters, suggested that he should select certain passages for her to peruse, as some were quite unfit for one of her sex to read. "Phoo," answered the lady, "a historian is of no sex," after which she promptly proceeded to read them all.

At that time it was no unusual thing for manuscripts to be destroyed or suppressed, and a charge was made against Mrs. Macaulay of tearing out four leaves from a collection of State letters—possibly the very tit-bits before alluded to. But, however suspicious the circumstances, no positive proof against her was ever found.

On the death of her husband, Mrs. Macaulay migrated to Bath, where she made the acquaintance of the Reverend Thomas Wilson. It is probable the friendship was simply platonic, and that the doctor's presents of a house and library were merely tokens of the admiration he felt for this learned lady. By and by, however, when the "sexless" one was nearly fifty, she became enamoured of, and married, a youth of twenty-one, a brother of Dr. Graham, the Quack. This marriage so incensed Dr. Wilson that he completely lost his temper, and threatened to have her turned out of the house. He had previously placed a white marble statue of her in the chancel of St. Stephen's Church, Walbrook, of which he was curate; in this she was represented as History, a pen in her right hand, and her left arm resting on a volume of her history. He had, also, procured a vault in which she might eventually rest. The statue was now taken down, and the vault sold!

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In her later years Mrs. Macaulay spent much time in beautifying her personal appearance; Dr. Johnson, who could not abide her republican views, declared that it was better she should "redden her own cheeks" than "blacken other people's characters." To prove how unworkable were her political theories, the doctor pretended one day to be converted to her way of thinking, and suggested that as all men were equal, her footman, who appeared a sensible and well-conducted young man, should be invited to dine with them.

But although Johnson made jests at her expense, many of her critics turned her into ridicule, and Horace Walpole called her "that hyena in petticoats," Mrs. Macaulay was not without admirers. Mrs. Wollstonecraft, in her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, described the historian as "the woman of the greatest ability that this country has ever produced"; and Lecky calls her "the ablest writer of the new radical school." It is also said that her talents were greatly appreciated by the French nation.

An amusing story is told of this Dr. Birch, who tried so manfully to guard the morals of Mrs. Macaulay. This gentleman was a zealous fisherman, and, apparently being gifted with an imagination of a peculiar type, he invented a remarkable dress, which he believed the fish would be so totally lacking in intelligence as to mistake for a tree, its waving arms for branches. Day after day was he to be seen, sitting by his favourite stream, clad in this fantastic dress; but the fish merely splashed their tails as they swam past, until Birch was eventually forced to the painful conclusion that he had been wasting his time, and making a fool of himself.

It would be interesting to know, since Mrs. Macaulay was spending so much time in improving her personal appearance, if she ever visited Dr. Graham's celebrated "Temple of Health."

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A tall, good-looking man was the doctor. Moreover, his manners were polished, and the attractions that he offered to those who placed themselves under his care were many and varied. Amongst others, he promised health of body and mind, and surpassing beauty for at least a hundred years, which would conduce to a race of splendid human beings in the future generation; unlike the "present puny, insignificant, foolish, vicious and nonsensical race of Christians who quarrel, fight, bite, devour and cut one another's throats about they know not what." With so alluring a programme, small wonder was it that crowds flocked to the doctor's "Temple of Health" in Panton Street.

Graham had various ways of treating his patients, who were either placed in "Earth Baths," into which magnetic currents were passed, or on a "Magnetic Throne." Southey declares he saw this "half-knave, half-enthusiast" twice; the first time Graham was buried up to his neck in earth, surrounded by his patients; the second time he was sitting up to his chin in mud, his hair in full "pigeon wing" dress. As he was discanting upon the splendid health he obtained from earth-bathing, Southey asked why, if he was in such splendid health, there was any need for him to be immersed in mud. Graham's answer was confused: "Why—it was—it was—to show people that it did no harm—that it was quite innocent—that it was very agreeable—and—it gives me a chin as soft as the feathers of Venus's doves."

The doctor played on the folly of human nature, much in the same way as Peter M'Dougal, the Scotch drover, who won so great a reputation in the eastern counties for obtaining high prices for his cattle—"Ye'd know hoo it was I cam to mak sae guid a sale o' my beasties? Weel, I ken it was joost this—I fund a fule."

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It is said that Graham's house and apparatus cost ten thousand pounds. The house was, indeed, a palace of enchantment; the rooms were adorned by fine paintings and statuary, which, with sounds of music, soothed and charmed the senses. But Graham was a rich man in those days, for among his patients were many distinguished people. The bold ones drove up to his door in splendid carriages, while their more timid sisters, fearful of being recognized, left their carriages at the corner of the street, and, holding their fans to their faces, which were thickly veiled, they crept past the two giant porters who guarded this house of mystery. Graham also gave public exhibitions; at one of these Emma Lyon, afterwards the celebrated Lady Hamilton, posed as the Goddess of Health, in a remarkably diaphanous costume. Nor was this all, for in the "great Apollo apartment," lectures were given upon very unsavoury subjects.

George Colman wrote a skit on Graham and his "Temple of Health," for the Haymarket Theatre. The doctor himself was in a stage box on the first night, but, the rumour having got abroad that he intended to prosecute Colman for libelling him, not a handbill was he able to purchase, and the threatened action fizzled out.

In course of time, Graham, who hailed from the Cow Gate, Edinburgh, returned to his native town. But it is little wonder that his mud baths and magnetic thrones were too much for the "unco guid" of Scotland; one stifles a regret that John Knox was not living, to be able to denounce him from the pulpit! Still, Graham became such a source of scandal that he was imprisoned in the Talbooth for "his late injurious publications in this City," during which time he preached from the text: "All flesh is grass." A fortnight later he was, however, bailed out, and in spite of a fine of twenty pounds, which was paid by his friends, he continued



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his lectures, so long as there was anyone to listen to him.

But the enormous expenses of Panton Street had swallowed up most of Graham's resources, and the lectures were now conducted on a very cheap scale, the price of entrance being only three shillings. As a bait, each person was presented with a book worth six shillings—a copy of his lectures, but even this inducement was not great enough to entice the “dour” Scotch folk to the lectures, and the price of admission was further reduced to one shilling.

Graham had a great theory—perhaps the only rational and thoroughly respectable one—that most diseases originate from over much heat; so far did he carry this theory that, to show how well he could withstand the cold, he entered into communication with the “tacksman” who had charge of the leases of the King's Park, to allow him to build a house on the top of Arthur's Seat. But, although the tacksman agreed, this scheme was frustrated by the proprietor. Towards the end of his life, Graham became a religious fanatic, declaring that he had received a special mission from Heaven to announce the approach of the Millennium. He finally became so insane that he was confined to his own house as a lunatic, where he is said to have died in great poverty; and was buried in Greyfriars' Churchyard.

James Gillray, derived from a Highland name meaning “Ruddy Lad,” whose name at least suggests the country which gave Dr. Graham birth, was a famous caricaturist, who so boldly satirized the weaknesses of George the Third, “Farmer George” as he called him, and his family, that he caused a German General, little used to such licence, to remark: “Ah, I tell you vat—England is altogetder von libel.” To the credit of the royal victims they were rarely displeased, but highly diverted by these etchings, which were privately

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received at the palace while still wet from the press.

In one of these, *Frying Sprats*, the extreme frugality of the King and Queen was satirized, and Queen Charlotte is seen frying a meagre portion of sprats for the royal supper; while the accompanying picture, *Toasting Muffins*, shows the King, attired in a nightcap and dressing-gown, gravely toasting one of three muffins destined for their Majesties' breakfast.

Another etching, *A Connoisseur examining a Cooper*, represents the King, a save-all in hand, peering at a miniature of his pet aversion, Oliver Cromwell. The Royal Princesses were always looked upon as models of dutiful obedience, but in Gillray's picture, *Anti-Saccharites*, they seem on the verge of revolt over their sugarless tea, while their mother exclaims, as she drinks this unappreciated beverage: "Oh, dear creatures, do but taste it! You can't think how nice it is without sugar! And then consider how much work you'll save the poor Blackamoors by leaving off the use of it!" (The agitation of the slave trade is thought to have partly suggested this subject.) "And, above all, remember how much expense it will save your poor papa! Oh, it's a charming, cooling drink!"

Nor was the self-indulgent heir to the throne spared, for in an amusing sketch of the future George the Fourth, we see him suffering grievous pangs, the result of over-estimating his capacity for the cuisine. In *Ancient Music*, the dreary and ceremonious palace concerts so beloved of the King were caricatured, and among other characters, his Majesty is seen listening in a state of ecstasy, while the Queen is beating a drum, and Pitt, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, is performing on the rattle and the "coral-and-bells." But though these, and many other of Gillray's caricatures, were regarded with the greatest good-humour, he went too far; and the Royalties were greatly displeased at one of

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his caricatures, entitled *Sin, Death and the Devil*, in which the Queen is depicted as a repulsive old harridan.

There is little told of Gillray's early life, beyond that he was apprenticed to a letter-engraver, and growing tired of the drudgery, he ran away and joined a company of strolling players. This life did not apparently please him much better than the other, for he soon returned to London, where he became a pupil of Mr. Ashby, the celebrated writer-engraver, and afterwards it is believed that he studied under Bartolozzi. During Gillray's apprenticeship he does not appear to have shown any remarkable talent for drawing; although when he was twelve years old we hear of his making a clever etching of Lord North, with an owl perched upon his head, entitled *A Committee of Grievances and Apprehensions*. At first his etchings were on ordinary social subjects, but a few years later they became almost entirely political.

Gillray lodged in the house of a certain Mistress Humphreys, the caricature print-seller, a lively spinster who amused the artist with all the news and gossip of the town. Mistress Humphreys made no small profit out of her lodger's work, which was on sale in the shop-window or littered about the shop. In one of these prints, entitled *Twopenny Whist*, the good lady is herself seen resplendent in a white satin trimmed cap, with her faithful maid-servant, Betty Marshall, who triumphantly produces the trump card. This quaint trio lived in harmonious comradeship, and we hear that, apart from the culinary province, it would have been difficult to say which of the three was the greatest despot. Mistress Humphreys' shop, situated as it was in St. James's Street, gave Gillray excellent opportunities of studying the faces of the political world and other notable persons, for they were constantly passing to and fro, as well as looking at the prints in the shop window. Of course Gillray occasionally got himself

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'disliked by his clever drawings; Burke did not particularly relish always appearing as the half-starved Jesuit; even Sheridan waxed wroth at invariably seeing himself as a portly personage with an alcoholic nose, while Fox almost went as far as to prosecute the artist, his self-esteem being so sorely wounded at being invariably represented as the "incarnation of diabolical sensuality."

Many were the comments made regarding Gillray's sprightly landlady and the "silent, shy and inexplicable" artist. Tradition even tells us how the pair once set out for St. James's Church to be wedded; but this rash undertaking evidently so weighed on the heart of Gillray that he turned back at the church door, declaring that matters had best be left as they were, a decision in which the bride elect acquiesced, though whether from conviction or from a sense of dignity can only be surmised. It was perhaps after this incident that Gillray's pair of burlesque etchings appeared; *Harmony before Matrimony*, showing two lovers spending an evening in chirping love ditties from the same book, while on the wall-paper are represented the torches of Hymen and a Cupid with a bow and quiver. In the sister picture, *Matrimonial Harmonies*, a lady dressed in a morning cap and wrapper is hammering out some mournful tune on the piano, while with no decrease of energy she sings: "Torture, fury, rage, despair, I cannot, cannot, cannot bear." By way of adding to the atmospheric disturbances an infant roars lustily, while the husband, with fingers in his ears, is seen reading the *Sporting Calendar*, and Cupid, his quiver emptied, rests sadly under the weeping willow, while alas! for the Bust of Hymen, its nose is broken.

Unlike most of his calling, Gillray, after his first years of strenuous labour, is said to have made no preliminary sketches before committing his ideas on to the copper, beyond rough sketches of his various characters

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drawn on cards, a supply of which he always carried in his pocket. A remarkably quick worker, some of his best drawings were finished in a few hours. George Cruikshank declared it was almost painful to watch the enthusiasm with which the artist worked ! But the constant strain of finding new subjects began to tell on Gillray's health ; he grew morose, even the lively conversation and kindly attentions of Mistress Humphreys failed in rousing him, and he finally sank into a state of imbecility, with occasional lucid intervals, when he drew a last few sketches. The last of these was the well-known *A Barber's Shop in Assize Time*, from a design of Bunbury.

For some five or six years the unhappy Gillray lived in one of the upper rooms in Mistress Humphreys' house, entirely supported by his faithful friend. The last time he was seen was one day when, having eluded his attendants, the poor mad artist wandered unshaven and unclad into the shop, only to be led back to his room. But that same day his troubles were mercifully ended. Some assert that he actually contrived to throw himself from his top window.











DR. WOLCOT (PETER PINDAR), BY J. OPIE, R.A.

*National Portrait Gallery, London.  
Emery Walker, Photographer.*

## CHAPTER IV

Dr. Wolcot (Peter Pindar)—William Gifford—Thomas Day—  
John Opie—Master Betty.

ABOUT this time, people were being regaled on the witty, not to say racy, satires of Peter Pindar, better known as Dr. Wolcot. For Peter was well versed in human nature; the follies and weaknesses of men lay before him denuded of shame, and he made no scruple in showing them as they were to the world. So greatly, indeed, did the Government of George the Third fear Peter's ridicule, that they offered him a pension of three hundred a year if he would refrain from writing against the Ministry, and use his subtle pen on their behalf. At that time Wolcot was not very prosperous, and he accepted the offer: but the situation was now a delicate one, for owing to certain disrespectful comments on the King, he was prohibited from drawing the pension himself; John Taylor, oculist and good-natured gossip of those times, however, came to the rescue and offered to "bring the bag," as Wolcot called it. Eventually the Government came to the conclusion that, as the doctor had written nothing on their behalf beyond a few epigrams against the Jacobites, he had not earned his pension, and the arrangement came to an abrupt conclusion.

A keen critic of other writers was the doctor. In the commencement of Addison's *Cato*—"The dawn is overcast . . ." Wolcot declared that Punch expressed the same subject with greater simplicity, and in a

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happier way when he said : " A hazy morning, Master Noah."

Wolcot found Johnson's style ponderous, and describes it—almost impromptu—in the following lines :

" I cannot like friend Johnson's turgid style,  
It gives an inch the importance of a mile,  
Casts of manure a wagon-load around  
To raise a simple daisy from the ground :  
Uplifts the club of Hercules—for what ?  
To crush a butterfly or brain a gnat,—  
Creates a whirlwind from the earth to draw  
A goose's feather or exalt a straw,  
Sets wheels on wheels in motion—what a clatter  
To force up one poor nipperkins of water—  
Bids ocean labour with tremendous roar  
To heave a cockle-shell upon the shore—  
Alike on every theme his pompous art  
Heaven's awful thunder, or a rumbling cart! "

A great contrast to these lines is a beautiful translation of *Somme levis*, rendered by Wolcot :

" Come, gentle Sleep, attend thy votary's prayer,  
And, though death's image to my couch repair  
How sweet, thus living, without life to lie,  
Thus without dying, O, how sweet to die."

Wolcot began life as an apothecary in Cornwall, but in 1767 we hear of his starting for the West Indies, where he acted as physician to Sir William Trelawny, who was Governor of Jamaica. But Sir William was more ready in making promises than in keeping them, and did not behave over well to the doctor ; so Wolcot accepted a living of eight hundred a year and took orders. His convictions, however, were distinctly unorthodox, and he soon resigned his living and returned to England.

Once more we hear of him taking up medicine at Truro, where, in spite of perpetual conflict with the fraternity, as Wolcot detested " red tape," and was a

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vehement opponent of many of the old methods of treatment then in vogue, he was regarded as a skilful physician. At no time was he an enthusiast in his profession, and had always preferred painting and versifying to prescribing drugs in which he had no great belief : yet, although obliged, as he said, to leave some sort of prescription behind him, he took good care it was one which would do no mischief : “ A physician can only watch Nature, and when she is going right, give a shove or two behind ! ”

A poet who has also been a physician is likely to have a practical side in his business concerns ; Wolcot had a very practical side, and the crafty way in which he brought about negotiations with the publishers is worth hearing. The doctor developed a cough ; a mighty spiteful cough it sounded those chilly mornings when, muffled up to his chin, he arrived at the publishers, so exhausted that he was obliged to ask, between his fits of coughing, for raw brandy.

One day, after he had left the office, these wise men shook their heads, and said with an ominous glance at each other : “ That poor devil is in a bad way, we shall be doing a generous action, and not an unprofitable one, by allowing him a handsome annuity,” and they were as good as their word. Shortly afterwards, it may be added, the doctor’s cough entirely vanished !

Wolcot always chuckled over this trick, and boasted that he was the only person who had been able to outwit a publisher. Nevertheless he confessed that whenever he went to draw his pension he expected to hear the church bell toll, for his life having been prolonged so far beyond what had been expected, he knew that mortification had taken place ! But apart from the pension obtained by this ruse, the sale of the doctor’s other works, when he was at the height of his popularity, brought in large sums.

Wolcot was a great admirer of the fair sex, and

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appears to have had many admirers among them. An amusing story is told of how a lady, named Spencer, was always worrying him to write her some verses. Now the doctor, we are told, was a "good looking mahogany colour," while Miss Spencer's complexion was one of her chief beauties. One day, when she had been more than usually persistent in her request for some verses, the doctor scribbled a few lines and handed them to her :

"O sweet Nancy Spencer, those beautiful eyes  
Were made for the downfall of man,  
At the sight of their fire thy true lover fries  
And wizzes like fish in a pan :  
O gemini father! How nature would quake  
Were you gifted with every perfection,  
I tremble to think what a havoc you'd make  
Were you blessed with my air and complexion."

Miss Spencer never forgave Wolcot for these verses, and henceforth he was blotted out of her acquaintance.

In spite of his weakness for feminine beauty, the doctor never married; once, indeed, he got so far as to make a proposal of marriage, but the object of his choice begged for a little time for reflection, and the delay proved fatal to her matrimonial prospects, as her faithless lover forgot to renew his proposals. In later years the ungallant Wolcot always spoke with great satisfaction of his narrow escape.

Few perhaps have had such an intense love of life as Wolcot; even when old and burdened by many infirmities, he often declared that were it possible he would gladly take a lease of five hundred years from nature, for as he said: "While here you are something, but when dead you are nothing." During his last illness a sealed packet was brought him, which he was told had been left by a gentleman dressed in black, who said he would call again. "Open it, my dear," he said to his fair secretary who was in attendance.



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The contents turned out to be a lengthy exhortation that the doctor should consider his latter days and turn his thoughts to repentance.

Wolcot in no way relished this allusion to his past peccadilloes, and fearing possible revelations, he cried out in a rage: "Burn it—burn it—I will not hear a word more—put it in the fire directly, and tell the fellow in black if he comes here again to go about his business. He may be the devil for aught I know, and he shall not catch me so easily."

The doctor's last words in answer to John Taylor's inquiry as to whether he could do anything for him, were pathetic: "Bring back my youth." Always an ardent admirer of *Hudibras* Butler, to whom he has been compared, Wolcot begged to be buried as near to him as possible in St. Paul's, Covent Garden, and his wish was fulfilled.

Once Dr. Wolcot involved himself in a most undignified skirmish with William Gifford, the translator of Juvenal and Persius, by mistaking him for John Gifford, the political and historical writer. It seems that John Gifford had written a scathing note upon Wolcot in the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, hearing of which the doctor proceeded post-haste to a bookseller's shop that William Gifford was in the habit of frequenting; and upon the individual whom Wolcot interrogated inside the shop admitting that his name was Gifford, the doctor promptly gave the unoffending William a clout on the head. A violent scuffle then ensued in which the doctor was worsted, being "bundled into the street and rolled in the mud," while his hat and wig were thrown after him. Wolcot tried to make the best of this inglorious fracas to his friends, declaring that he had only lost "A little claret," but relations between the two combatants remained strained for some time, though eventually they became reconciled.

The hero of this "rough and tumble" episode,



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William Gifford, was the son of a plumber and glazier. The family had once owned a considerable amount of land, but William's father, like his forebears, had never taken kindly to work; for a time he associated himself with the famous Bamfylde Moore Carew, King of the Gipsies, and he finally died from overmuch alcohol, followed a year later by his wife. So, with the exception of a little brother, who was immediately sent to the workhouse, and a godfather always referred to as "C," who was a hard, close-fisted sort of a fellow, William was, at the age of eleven, left alone in the world. Grudging every farthing that he spent on his godson, "C" sent him to school for a few months, intending at the end of that time to make use of him as a plough-boy; but William, luckily for him, had received an accidental blow on the chest, which incapacitated him from using the plough.

He was therefore sent to sea in a coasting vessel, where he led a wretched enough existence, every menial task being allotted to him. At last his ragged and altogether sorry appearance called forth the indignation of the fisher-folk, and their comments reaching the ears of William's godfather, that gentleman thought it more prudent that the boy should be recalled. So William was again sent to school, where he made such good progress that if any teacher unexpectedly failed, William was allowed to replace him. His great ambition now became to succeed his school-master, Mr. Smerdon, who was old and in feeble health. Such an idea was scouted with derision by William's amiable godfather, who now apprenticed him to a shoemaker.

This shoemaker was, we are told, a bigoted dissenter, whose intellectual needs were amply satisfied by reading tracts on the Exeter controversy—whatever that might have been—and who by dint of much noise and disputation invariably reduced his opponents to silence. So there was little hope to be looked for in

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that direction, and Gifford had to make the most of the one book he possessed—a treatise on algebra, which had been given him by a young woman who found it in a lodging-house. He, moreover, discovered that the shoemaker's son had lately purchased a book on mathematics, which would be of uncommon use to the young apprentice; it had been carefully hidden, for the shoemaker's son also aspired to be a teacher, and also aspired to succeed Mr. Smerdon.

But Gifford contrived to unearth this much coveted volume, and in a short time had mastered its contents. A new difficulty now arose, for Gifford possessed neither paper, pens nor ink, neither had he the money to procure any; by means, however, of a blunted awl, he worked out his problems on pieces of leather he had beaten out.

During his apprenticeship, William had made a few acquaintances at whose houses he now began reciting short poems of his own composition; small sums of money were collected for him at these little gatherings, which, we are told, sometimes amounted to as much as sixpence a day. With this money he bought writing materials and a few books; but fresh vials of wrath now burst upon his luckless head, for his master, discovering that the boy had satirized him and some of his customers, pounced upon his precious hoard of books, etc., and forbade him to recite again.

The next six years dragged along wearily enough for poor Gifford; at the end of that time a surgeon called Cookesley heard one of his doggerels, and was so much pleased by it that he collected sufficient money not only to buy up the remainder of William's apprenticeship, but to enable him to complete his studies. In course of time, a Bible clerkship at Oxford was procured for him, and he had just commenced on the translation of Juvenal when, to his great sorrow, Mr. Cookesley died. It would seem, however, that

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Destiny had grown weary of tormenting the young scholar, for she placed a new patron in his path in the shape of Lord Grosvenor.

Their acquaintance started in a curious way: Gifford was corresponding with an old college friend, a clergyman called Peters, who had arranged that their letters should be sent to be franked by Lord Grosvenor. One day Gifford omitted the address of his enclosed letter to Mr. Peters, which was opened and read by his lordship, who must have had more than a spice of curiosity in his composition; and as he was much struck by its literary style he sent for the young man, and afterwards engaged him as travelling companion to his son. Mr. Peters had a great deal to say on the subject of the unaddressed letter, declaring that the whole episode had been deliberately planned by Gifford, who had taken particular pains with his letter, and had wished to supplant him in Lord Grosvenor's favour. After Gifford returned from abroad he settled in London, and when the *Quarterly Review* was started, he became editor, and was perhaps almost better known in that capacity than in his translations.

An amusing story is told of how, when he was staying in Devonshire, he made the acquaintance of two elderly spinsters and agreed to take tea with them one day. The day arrived, and all went well until the ladies, in spite of his most fervent remonstrances, insisted upon refilling Gifford's cup so often that, "being overflowed with tea, I put down my fourteenth cup, and exclaimed with an air of resolution, 'I neither can nor will drink any more.' " After this vehement outburst, one of his hostesses explained that as he had not laid his spoon across the cup, she had only taken his remonstrances for politeness!

After Lord Sidmouth had been made Secretary of State, Gifford was appointed paymaster of the Honourable Band of Gentlemen Pensioners—or Men at Arms.

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It was his custom to inform the members, by means of a "circular" letter, that their salaries were about to be paid; sometimes, however, he scribbled a poetical notice to Mr. Bulmer, one of their oldest members, upon any odd sheet of paper which happened to be handy. The following was written when the word *Honourable* had been omitted by mistake in Gifford's commencement :

"TO W. BULMER, ESQ.

"I, who like any pea-hen gay,  
Cluck'd for my brood on Quarter-day,  
And saw them, at the well-known sound,  
Come waddling, gobbling, clustering round,  
Now, thanks to your pernicious press  
That robb'd the *Forty*, more or less,  
Of all their 'Honour'—find each note,  
Stick like Grim-gribber in my throat.  
What Imp of that old Serpent's seed  
Urged you to this felonious deed?  
Say, was it pride?—that He, the Knight,  
First of the name, Sir Fenwick hight,  
Might shine 'in his new gloss' and stand  
Sole *Honourable* in the Band!  
Oh evil, evil have you done;—  
My letters now are spit upon;  
And though the *Forty* shall repair  
To James Street, humbled as they are,  
Yet, blank of face, and chill of heart,  
They 'come like shadows, so depart!'—  
And come (for I would fain forget  
My private wrongs, dear Bulmeret!)  
You, too; but not, as you were wont,  
With careless air and open front,  
But—lest the Band your steps should mark,  
Wrapt 'in the blanket of the dark';  
Or you may witness to your cost,  
What wrath can do, when *Honour's* lost! "

Gifford being of an economical turn of mind, left, at his death, a goodly fortune; most of this he

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bequeathed to the son of his late friend and patron, Mr. Cookesley. He also left three thousand pounds to the relations of a certain favourite maid-servant, Anna Davis, who had lived in his service for twenty-six years. So strong an attachment did Gifford cherish towards this Anna Davis, that he expressed a wish to be buried near her, in a burying-ground attached to Grosvenor Chapel, upon which subject he wrote an elegy commencing: "I wish I was where Anna lies." His friend, Dr. Ireland, persuaded him, however, that he should after his death be buried in Westminster Abbey.

Although Gifford showed doubts of a future life, and a marked preference for the life he knew, he had none of the positive scepticism of Thomas Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton*, and the ardent disciple of Rousseau. Day's father was a wealthy man for those days, and after Thomas left Charterhouse he was sent to Oxford, where he formed the lifelong friendship with Richard Edgeworth, father of Maria Edgeworth, from whom he imbibed Rousseau's teachings through every pore. Thomas, moreover, determined on taking a wife, who must be trained by himself according to his ideals.

So, accompanied by a friend, John Bicknell, he started for Shrewsbury, at which place was an Institution for destitute girls. Here, his choice fell on a flaxen-haired girl of twelve years, whom he named Sabrina Sidney, the latter after the name of one of his ideal authors. And, not from any polygamous tastes he had acquired, but because he believed in the law of selection, in however circumscribed a form, Day soon set out, accompanied by Sabrina, for the Foundling Hospital, London, where he chose yet another orphan of the same tender age, whom he called Lucretia.

Both institutions had been furnished with a written pledge that the orphan he did not ultimately choose as a bride should, at his expense, be apprenticed within



58 Baker Street

Portman Square

Dec: 26<sup>th</sup>  
11

Sir

I hope you will pardon my presumption of requesting to obtain your waxen statue for my exhibition which (if you should do me the honour and favour of acceding to ~~my~~ my request) shall be placed among the most illustrious personages of the age in appropriate costume

The image of the famous and wronged Dr. Smithurst has recently been added to my collection and ~~therefore~~ forms an object of much interest and attraction - In close proximity to this work of art - with your sanction I propose to place <sup>your statue</sup> ~~that of~~ ~~you~~ and earnestly hoping that this requisition may meet with your approval

I am Sir with every sentiment of esteem and respect

Yours very sincerely  
John Carden Egan M. Tussard -

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the year to some decent tradesman, with future expectations should she behave herself in a seemly fashion.

Then to France started the singular trio, so that Day should, by constant watchfulness and companionship, learn the disposition of each, and mould her character as he thought most fit. It was certainly an unusual manner of conducting the preliminary steps towards matrimony, but Day was distinctly original.

The first results were discouraging: Day and his orphans fell out: then they developed small-pox. The young man behaved in an exemplary fashion, nursing the girls through their illness; for although he engaged a French maid, she could speak no English, and the orphans utterly refused to be left alone with her. He was glad enough to bring them back to London, and before long the harassed Thomas ridded himself of Lucretia, by apprenticing her to a milliner on Ludgate Hill; and seeing she behaved herself discreetly, he provided her with a generous marriage portion.

Day was now left with Sabrina. He had a small circle of literary and choice friends, among whose names are James Watt, Dr. Parr, Lord Monboddo, Dr. Johnson. This circle may even have included Madame Tussaud, who, we are told, knew Rousseau intimately, and in her *Memoirs* gives an interesting description of his appearance. But, alas! Sabrina fell sadly short of his expectations, for Rousseau's Spartan principles in no way appealed to her. She would probably have far more appreciated Madame Tussaud's Wax-works.

When Day tested her courage by dropping sealing-wax on her arms, she flinched: when he fired pistols at her garments, she screamed: when he pretended to tell her important secrets, which were under no consideration to be revealed, she babbled them forth to the maids. As a crowning enormity, she wore thin sleeves when on a visit. This was too much for

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Thomas, and Sabrina was packed off to a boarding-school, and ultimately married John Bicknell, who had first accompanied Day to the Shrewsbury Institution. Her patron was not best pleased at the marriage, but he behaved in the same generous fashion as he had to Lucretia.

Having made such a fiasco of his matrimonial theories of *educating* a bride, he made one or two further attempts at courting, which did not come off. His theories having temporarily cooled, he went to Paris, and aspired to blossom forth as a man of fashion: it is amusing to hear that, as well as fencing, he learnt to dance! But after a while he came to the conclusion that celibacy was his vocation, and he became a wanderer to various places and countries. Yet some seven years later he was more than content to settle down and marry a Miss Milnes, an inhabitant of Wakefield, a lady of fortune, who had already received her education. He scrupulously settled her fortune upon herself so that, in the event of her tiring of the Spartan life, she would be secure of an income.

As a husband Day seems to have been a sad tyrant: he forbade his wife to have a servant, obliged her to relinquish her harmless vanities and amusements, and to vegetate with him in the heart of the country, content with books and a series of good works, as her only dissipations; to all of which demands she conceded, for she dearly loved her tyrant; one feels that the orphans had had a merciful escape.

Educational theories were to prove fatal to Day, for he was killed by a fall from a horse while endeavouring to train it after a particular method of his own. His wife was heart-broken, and only survived her husband two years.

A book of poems, of which *The Dying Negro* is the finest, and which oddly enough did not entirely exclude a few love sonnets; a number of political

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pamphlets; and *Sandford and Merton*, were the extent of Day's literary works.

When Dr. Wolcot was living in Cornwall he heard from the village yokels enthusiastic accounts of a young artist prodigy; this prodigy was John Opie. Determined to unearth the youthful genius, the doctor found him at the bottom of a saw pit, busily engaged in sawing wood. In answer to the doctor's questions as to what he had painted he replied in his strong Cornish accent: "Blazing stars, Duke William, King and Queen and Mrs. Nankivell's cat." Learning, moreover, that all through the summer the boy rose every morning at three o'clock to draw, the doctor felt that such enthusiasm must be the forerunner of success, and immediately furnished him with canvas, pencils and colours. The doctor did more than this, for he received his protégé into his home, and had him educated and instructed in his art.

It has been said that Opie was treated as a common menial in the doctor's house, but this has been very strongly denied; on the contrary, his position seems to have been that of a friend and companion, or, as one writer expresses it, that of a "parlour guest." These new surroundings must have felt strange to the young artist after his humble cottage home, where it must be confessed he was perpetually at loggerheads with his father, a carpenter, and a man of an eminently practical mind, who had little patience with his son's artistic ambitions, but who was determined that he too should become a carpenter. Indeed, to make sure he did not go elsewhere, he apprenticed him to himself. And often enough, when Opie was making chalk sketches on deal boards lately planed for use, his father's stick was brought down upon his shoulders.

But the boy refused to be discouraged, and, after drawing everything and everybody within his small circle, a consuming desire seized him to make a por-

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trait of his stern parent. It was not to be expected, under the circumstances, that Mr. Opie senior would deliberately lend himself to act the part of a model, so a plan had to be thought out which would take him unawares.

Accordingly one Sunday morning while his mother was at church, young Opie arranged his drawing materials in the kitchen so as to face the parlour where his father was sitting reading the Bible. Drawing as much as he could from memory, every now and then he ran into the parlour to take a look at his father's face, who, annoyed at such frequent and unaccountable interruptions, angrily threatened dire consequences if they continued, thus unconsciously falling into the trap, for his face sparkling with anger and indignation was the very expression that Opie wished to catch.

By the time his mother returned from church the picture was finished, and Opie eagerly ran to show her his work. But though the good lady could not but acknowledge the striking likeness, she and her husband were simple, pious folk, and considered such practices on the Sabbath as ungodly; she therefore began to scold the young artist severely. At that moment Opie's father came into the room, who, after examining the portrait, felt so elated with paternal pride, that his religious scruples vanished, and the picture was handed round to admiring neighbours.

For his first portraits Opie asked the modest sum of five shillings, and when Wolcot told him that he might raise the price to half-a-guinea, he was dazzled by such visions of riches, and replied that it was superior to his merit, and that he really believed "the country could not afford it." And when he brought home his first twenty guineas, he threw them on the table, then, sweeping the precious hoard on to the floor, he rolled over it, exclaiming in glee: "See here, here be I wolving in gould." To give his protégé greater



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advantages, Wolcot took him to London, and introduced him to such delights as Cremorne Gardens and Sadler's Wells; while all the world of fashion flocked to see him, and through considerable influence, an introduction was obtained for him at Court; coached by the doctor he made his bows, carrying several of his pictures with him. The uncouth lad must often have been a sore trial to the doctor, who said he should have liked to make him a Michael Angelo, but that would have necessitated making him a gentleman.

An amusing story is told of how "that unlicked cub of a carpenter, Opie, who was most ludicrously exhibited by his keeper Wolcot, a wild animal of St. Agnes, caught among the tin-works," was once invited to breakfast at Mrs. Boscawen's, a great lady of fashion, and solemnly admonished by the doctor not to "clap his fingers into the sugar basin." Unfortunately flesh is weak, temptation was strong, and Opie succumbed.

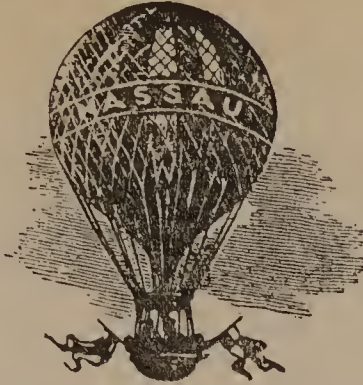
Part of a letter to John and Edward Penwarne, written in 1782, gives us a good insight into Opie's entrance into "le beau monde": "I have been exceedingly lucky since I have been here. I have all the quality at my lodgings every day—nothing but Lords, Ladies, Dukes, Duchesses, etc. I was introduced to Sir Josh (Sir Joshua Reynolds), who said many handsome things of me both to my face and behind my back." Then Opie falls into his familiar dialect: "But, Loard, I've a zee'd the King and the Queen, and was with them at the Queen's house and taalked wi' mun two hours and painted vor mun the picture of an old lady and a blind beggar and dog." He adds naively: "I am not yet paid for 'em." At the end of the letter, it is only fair to add, Opie says that the King commissioned West, the artist, to ask the price of the pictures, so we may reasonably conclude that they were eventually paid for.

But Opie's popularity lasted little more than a year;

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**"HOT CODLINGS.**

**In the Car, just before the Ascent!**

The Balloon will rise FROM A STAGE, in order to give every one  
an opportunity of witnessing the Ascent in any part of the Grounds.

On Sunday Evening, the Visitors who may be curious and scientific  
in Aerology, will be gratified by a view of

**THE BALLOON INFLATED!**

And a close inspection of the Car, Grappling Irons, &c &c.—The  
Veteran GREEN will attend, and, with that politeness and urbanity  
which always distinguishes him, give any explanation or answers  
to questions propounded by those interested in Aerial Navigation.

No Charge is made for admission into the Grounds on Sundays; but  
every Visitor is expected to take Refreshments to the amount of 6d.

**REFRESHMENTS by Mr LITTLEJOHN.**

N.B. Cremorne House is a Nobleman's Mansion, standing on one  
of the most beautiful Lawns in England, and surrounded by a  
thickly wooded Park or Forest, surpassing in beauty of woodland  
scenery and effect many of the Royal Estates.

"Oh do, Papa, take me to see the BALLOON go up. we shall  
hear the Funny Mr. MATTHEWS sing "Hot Codlings" in the Car:  
it's only Sixpence for Children. do, Pa, let me go or take Mamma,  
and all of us on Sunday Afternoon to see the Large BALLOON,  
and have Tea--you don't pay for going in there, you know, now you  
will, there's a good Pa, won't you."  
*Juvenile Request.*

*S. G. Fairbrother, Printer 1, Bon Street, Covent Garden*

## PERSONALITIES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

by some this is attributed to a lack of refinement in his painting, by others that he scorned to flatter his feminine sitters. "Shaan't I draa ye as ye be?" he asked one lady who complained that he had not done her justice in his portrait; and one can well understand that such remarks were hardly calculated to make these fine ladies smile upon him for long.

The bond which linked Wolcot and Opie together for so many years had slackened; caused, it is said, by Opie failing to carry out an agreement to pay Wolcot a share of his profits, in return for the many expenses he had caused him. There were other reasons which estranged them; for Opie stolidly refused to praise Wolcot's attempts at painting: "I tell zee, ze can't paint, stick to the pen," said this painfully candid artist, and this advice from "a painting ape" was never forgiven. In a burst of confidence, Wolcot confided in Taylor, that the original cause of the coolness was that Opie had supplanted him in the affections of a seductive servant maid, although we hear, and it seems more probable, that she was a seductive widow; one of Wolcot's patients. "Jan had much vanity," he used to say, "even before he knew the great world." It certainly was a low-down trick to play the doctor, that while actually staying in Wolcot's house, "Jan" used to borrow the doctor's horse, to prevent his visits to the lady in question from being interrupted by his patron.

Opie's first marriage was not conspicuous for its success; absorbed in his work, he had little time to devote to his wife, who found consolation in the greater attentions of a lover whom she afterwards married. The artist could never have felt much sentiment over his first marriage, or the following witty conversation with Godwin, the atheist, would hardly have taken place. He and Godwin were walking together near St. Martin's Church, when Opie exclaimed: "Ah! I

# THE FAIR

has its attractions, and no doubt many a Bright Eyed Susan pays a visit there with her admiring Swain; but the greatest attraction at present is the charming pretty little

## **Black Eyed Susan,**

every Evening at

## **SADLERS WELLS,**

where a thronging and sympathising audience are wound up to the highest pitch of anxiety, for the fate of her WILLIAM.

After the above, is given

## *A Dish of all Sorts,*

in which the

### **YOUNG DISLOQUE,**

will go through his astonishing performances;

In which will also be introduced,

“The Irish Schoolmaster,” by - MR. BROWN.

A Song by - - - Miss ADAMI,

A Song by - MRS. WILSON,

A Ballad by - - MR. WILLIAMS, mounted on a  
**REAL DONKEY!!**

A Song by - - - MR. FOSTER.

After which,

a most Laughable Burletta, called

## **THE PUGILIST,**

The whole to conclude with a most superb display of

## **FIRE WORKS.**



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was married in that Church." "Indeed," answered Godwin, "and I was christened in it." "It is not a good shop," said Opie, "their work don't last."

In his second matrimonial venture, Opie was more fortunate, and in his anxiety to surround his wife with every comfort, he worked hard to remedy what had been lacking in his former pictures. New delicacy and grace crept into his work, and with the exception of one slack period, orders flowed in until his death. "The wild animal of St. Agnes" was never, perhaps, thoroughly tamed, he had never learnt to be artificial, but he achieved that which those who sneered at his plebeian ways could never hope to attain.

Among Opie's pictures was the portrait of an infant prodigy, who was represented as having drawn inspiration from the tomb of Shakespeare. This prodigy was the boy actor, William Henry West Betty, otherwise, "Master Betty." The son of a small farmer, of Irish extraction and independent means, Master Betty early showed a talent for dramatic recitation; and when at ten years old he was taken to see Mrs. Siddons in *Pizarro*, he exclaimed to his father: "I shall certainly die if I do not become an actor." Whether Master Betty would have succumbed to thwarted aspiration will never be known, for from that time he obtained introductions to actors and managers, and a year later we hear of him acting in Ireland, taking such parts as Romeo and Tancred; and although it is said that all Ireland was not universally agreed about his genius, he met with enormous success.

Scotland now clamoured after this "Infant Roscius"; an engagement was offered him in Glasgow, and it is not an exaggeration to say that Scotland went "fair daft" over Master Betty. One individual, indeed, ventured to differ from the general opinion, but this person of poor discrimination had such an exceedingly bad time in consequence, that he was





W. H. W. BETTY, BY G. H. E. HARLOW.

*National Portrait Gallery, London.  
Emery Walker, Photographer.*



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obliged to quit the town. Edinburgh waxed even more enthusiastic than Glasgow over this boy wonder, and we are told that when Home saw him acting in his own play of *Douglas*, he was so overcome with emotion that he "blubbered" in the boxes! England now caught the Rosciomania, as Lord Byron afterwards called it, and having turned the heads of everyone in the provinces, and making sometimes as much as five hundred pounds a week, Master Betty accepted an engagement at Covent Garden Theatre.

It is difficult to imagine the excitement which raged the day young Roscius made his debut in *Barbarosse* at Covent Garden. In the early hours of the morning, crowds had already assembled in the street, and when the doors were thrown open, in spite of the police, hundreds of people ran the risk of being suffocated or crushed to death; while we hear that gentlemen paid box-prices to have a chance of jumping into the pit, and that some of these gentlemen were as great sufferers from the heat as the ladies. While "upwards of twenty who fainted were dragged up into the boxes," and the ladies in one or two of the boxes "fanned" the gentlemen who were below them in the pit. Before the play commenced, an address was to have been given by Charles Kemble; but the hubbub was so great, and as no one showed the least interest in what he had to say, Kemble very wisely said nothing. The first act of *Barbarosse* was also omitted, as the public could not rest until the object of their enthusiasm appeared.

Master Betty seems to have fulfilled the expectations of his impassioned audience, and he now became their idol; Royalties made much of him; even the hard-headed Cambridge professors joined in the general homage. While an old actor, known as "Gentleman Smith," the original "Charles Surface," came up from the country on purpose to see Master Betty's perform-

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ance; and after the play was over presented him with a seal upon which was a likeness of Garrick. This was a great tribute to the young actor's talents, for on his death-bed Garrick had made Smith promise he would never part with the seal until he had met with an actor who played from *nature* and from *feeling*. Yet even at that time, there were exceptions to his admirers, as we read in Richard Cumberland's sarcasm on this boy prodigy: "We shall have a second influx of the pigmies; they will pour upon us in multitudes innumerable as a shoal of sprats, and when at last we have nothing else but such small fry to feed on, an epidemic nausea will take place."

An arrangement had now been made that Master Betty should play alternate nights at Drury Lane and Covent Garden; at the end, however, of about a year the furore he had created gradually subsided, and a year later it ceased altogether. His father now bought him an estate in Shropshire, where he amused himself by hunting, and having joined the Yeomanry Cavalry he became known as Captain Betty! But poor Master Betty sorely missed the applause of former days; indeed, after his father's death he made an attempt to regain his place on the stage and failed ignominiously: nothing now remained for him but to retire into private life. Could any career have had a more prosaic ending? Who would wish to be a celebrity at ten years old if it entailed being a nonentity at sixteen? An early death might have rekindled a lost glamour, but Master Betty lived to the ripe age of eighty-two!

## CHAPTER V

Charles Macklin—Mr. Arthur Murphy—Mrs. Abington—Horne Tooke.

AMONG the most distinguished actors of the eighteenth century was Charles MacLaughlin, or Macklin as he preferred to call himself, seeing how hopelessly people floundered over his real name.

A rare personality had Macklin, saying what he chose, in the way that he chose, at the time that he chose. For example, when he chanced to be among the audience at a theatre, he had not the smallest hesitation in expressing his views in an audible voice, about anything that struck him upon the stage. Once when he had held forth, in a particularly dogmatic way, John Taylor, with the partition of the boxes between them, ventured to give a different opinion. Upon which Macklin thundered out, so that his words could be heard by the whole house: "Write down what you have said, sir, and I will answer it." Poor Taylor, probably wishing he had not survived his birth, was cowed into silence.

Macklin gives us a good description of the audience who filled the pit in those days: "Sir, you then saw no red cloaks, and heard no pattens in the pit, but you saw merchants from the city with big wigs; lawyers from the Temple with big wigs, and physicians from the coffee-houses with big wigs; and the whole exhibited such a formidable grizzle as might well shake the nerves of actors and authors."

At that time it was the custom of actors and literary



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men to walk in the Piazza of Covent Garden about noon, afterwards adjourning to dine at different coffee-houses. One morning as Macklin was sauntering along this favourite promenade with a party of friends, he met Samuel Foote, who was walking with another party. Each gave the other a furtive glance, and as they again passed, Foote said in a loud voice to his friends: "There goes that rascal Macklin, who bamboozles people into thinking him an actor." Before Foote was out of hearing Macklin's voice was heard: "My dear fellow, did you notice that ugly brute Foote? If his mother could produce no better specimen of the human race, she had better have remained barren."

The two parties walked on, discussing the news of the town, but next time they passed, Macklin had first innings, Foote being apparently engrossed in telling some story. "I'll warrant," he said, "that blackguard Foote is disgorging some choice morsel from his rag-bag mind." This retort called forth a roar of laughter, followed by a fresh avalanche of invectives; but their friends became bored and dropped off, one by one, leaving Macklin and Foote alone.

Arthur Murphy, the playwright, who had been a hidden spectator of this scene, now peeped out cautiously from behind a pillar, for to let himself in, even as a spectator, to a duel which seemed threatening, was the last thing that Murphy desired. His relief was, therefore, only equalled by his astonishment at hearing Foote say to Macklin in the most amicable voice: "Macklin, as we are left alone, suppose we take a beefsteak together?" "With all my heart," replied Macklin, and they adjourned to The Bedford as though they had always been the most devoted friends.

But it was not to be expected that two such egotistical men as Macklin and Foote, who had, moreover, so wide a scope for rivalry, would long remain friends; and before long Macklin was employing his superfluous

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energy in casting aspersions upon Foote's character; while Foote, with great disdain, referred to the time when Macklin had been footman to an extravagant student at the Dublin University. Eventually, after they had both made themselves a nuisance to everybody, they buried the hatchet and became friends.

In Foote's sneering allusions there was a vein of truth, for during Macklin's days of poverty in Ireland he had made friends with some undergraduates, who, in return for his songs and stories, lent him books, which he fetched from the college; and for want of a more lucrative employment he acted as "bagerman." And when he first came to London he held the still more humble post of under-waiter at a public-house, until, feeling his position too keenly, he joined a party of strolling players, which led to his obtaining a regular engagement on the stage.

Macklin had in his acting three pauses; the last one, or "grand pause" as he called it, was so long that upon one occasion his prompter, thinking he had forgotten his part, repeated the cue several times, the last one so loudly that it was heard by the whole house. This was too much for Macklin, whose temper we are told was "unaccommodating," and, rushing from the stage, he knocked down the unfortunate prompter, exclaiming: "The fellow interrupted me in my great pause."

One cannot help sympathizing with Macklin's want of control under such aggravating circumstances, but unfortunately his violent temper once led to a terrible tragedy. No lady was involved, as might be supposed, the dispute being founded on no more romantic basis than a difference of opinion with Hallam, the actor, in the stage dressing-room, as to who should wear a particular wig. But in the scuffle that followed, Macklin's case so seriously damaged Hallam's eye that he died from the injury. Macklin's horror and

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distress can well be imagined, but, though tried at the Old Bailey, he was acquitted, it not being a case of "malice prepense."

We now come to the plot which was hatched against him by some of his enemies, who were jealous of his success. Before his time, the character of Macbeth had been represented in ordinary military dress, but Macklin introduced the old Scotch costume. His enemies thought this bold innovation would be a good moment to strike their blow. As soon as he appeared in his new rôle he was greeted by shouts of applause; but on the second night the applause was mingled with the hisses of his enemies; and on the third and fourth night the hisses drowned the applause. He now wisely determined to give up the character of Macbeth and act his famous part of Shylock. But his enemies had formed a powerful conspiracy; stationing themselves at different points of the theatre, hisses were heard on all sides, apples began to fly, one even hitting Macklin in the face, and the whole theatre was in an uproar.

At last a board, painted black, was placed upon the stage on which was written in white letters: "*At the command of the Public Mr. Macklin is discharged from the theatre,*" and the managers, not daring to oppose public opinion, retired to the green-room. But though the actor's enemies had succeeded in their dastardly efforts to get him dismissed from the theatre, he now set himself diligently to unearth the conspirators, and finding that Reddish, Sparks and others were the leaders he brought an action against them.

The case was heard before Lord Mansfield and lasted a considerable time, there being many witnesses on both sides. The law, to use Lord Mansfield's words, took the following view: "To be sure, every man that is at the Play-house has a right to express his approbation or disapprobation instantly, according as he likes either the acting or piece. . . . The gist of the

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crime here is, coming by conspiracy to ruin . . . a particular man," and Lord Mansfield added: "What a terrible condition is an actor in upon the stage, with an Enemy who makes part of the Audience!"

The verdict was finally pronounced in Macklin's favour, and damages awarded him, but these he declined, saying he wished for no recompense as he had brought the case only to vindicate his character. The judge then arose, and amid perfect silence he addressed the actor as follows: "Mr. Macklin, I have often admired your talents, but you have never acted better than upon this occasion."

Among other notable men of Macklin's acquaintance was Merlin, the celebrated mechanic: one day when the actor went to visit him, after closely examining many ingenious inventions, he swung himself off a movable chair which had greatly taken his fancy, and said with the utmost gravity: "Sir, if I was a despotic monarch I would have you confined in a room; I would supply all your wants and wishes; I should then say to you: 'For the benefit of mankind, think!'" After which speech Macklin brought his visit to a close, leaving Merlin half awe-struck, half puffed up with pride.

As a father the actor seems to have been stern and exacting, at least as regards his daughter, who became an actress; and though he came once every year from Dublin to act his most successful parts for her "Benefit," this compliment was somewhat counter-balanced by his insisting that she should pay his fare, as well as all the expenses for the performance. She was also expected to lend her gold watch to a friend in London in case he should insist on having it. His parental severity is also amusingly described in one of his letters to her: "Pray, in your writing, never write *couldn't*, *shouldn't*, *wouldn't*, nor any abbreviation whatever. It is vulgar, rude, ignorant, unlettered, and disrespectful . . . nor never write M. Macklin. Pray,



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who is M. ? . . . Never make the vile apologies in your letters of being—‘ *greatly hurried with business* ’; or ‘ *must now conclude, as this instant the post is going out.* ’ Then why did you not begin sooner ? ”

Macklin was a well-skilled teacher, and at one time set up an Academy for Elocution, on the subject of which Mr. Town of *The Connoisseur* observed that what pleased him most about Mr. Macklin’s “ Institution ” was, that the tongues of his fair countrywomen were permitted full play : and that “ the remarkable tendency in our politest ladies ‘ to talk,’ though they have nothing ‘ to say,’ and the torrent of eloquence that pours (on the most trivial occasions) from the lips of those females called Scolds, give abundant proofs of that command of words, and flow of eloquence, which so few men have been able to attain.”

In his later days, Macklin was in very straitened circumstances, and his memory became so clouded that he was obliged to retire from the stage. It is believed that Dr. Johnson referred to Macklin at this time, when he spoke of a person who was “ a perpetual renovation of hope, with a constant disappointment ” ; for the poor old actor still loved to linger over his past reminiscences, and Taylor, with his knowledge of theatrical history, was often able to help his memory in the yarns he delighted to tell.

Long after Macklin had retired from the stage his devotion to it continued, and Mr. Harris, the manager, allowed him a free pass at his theatre, where the veteran actor was often to be seen, sitting in the front row of the pit. If an actor’s voice failed in reaching him, he would cry out in his old imperious way, which must have been extremely disconcerting to the one addressed : “ Speak louder, sir, I cannot hear you.”

Macklin lived to a great age ; one of his biographers, Kirkman, declares he was one hundred and seven when he died ! Taylor describes very vividly his last meet-



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ing with him : the old actor was walking at a great pace, on a bitterly cold day, in Henrietta Street. To Taylor's remark : " Well, Mr. Macklin, I suppose you are comparing the merits of former actors with those of the present day," he replied in a loud voice : " The *what* of the present day, the *what*, sir? " So loudly did he say these last words that they echoed all down the street. Taylor, who was nothing if not persevering, replied : " Perhaps, sir, you will not allow the present race to be actors? "

" Good morning, sir," was the abrupt reply, as Macklin hastily continued his walk.

Mr. Arthur Murphy, the actor and playwright, who showed such caution in hiding behind a pillar when Macklin and Foote were insulting one another on the Piazza in Covent Garden, showed equal discretion in his attitude towards Dr. Johnson, whom he never contradicted, while at the same time he tactfully expressed his own opinions.

For example, when Johnson was particularly dogmatic on any subject he would say : " But, doctor, may it not be said in answer," and then he ventured his own opinion. Sometimes Johnson would say : " Yes, sir, it may, by a fool," sometimes with greater politeness, " Yes, sir, but with more plausibility than truth."

Then Murphy, who liked to draw out the doctor and see how far he would persist in his arguments, would try new tactics : " I think, doctor, a French author, much esteemed, was not of your opinion." And the doctor, who, according to Murphy, seems to have formed a rather higher opinion of French men of letters than of his own countrymen, would usually reply : " Well, sir, the French *literati* are a learned and intelligent body, and their opinions should not be hastily rejected." In this way Murphy boasted that the doctor had never actually been rude to him ; indeed it was said that Murphy realized Johnson's idea of " a

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fine gentleman," while, on his part, he had never been servile to Johnson. Perhaps his connection with the doctor's beloved Thrale family gave him greater latitude of speech than was allowed to others.

It was always a source of mortification to Murphy that he had ever been on the stage, and once when reading a sketch of his life in some magazine, he came across an allusion to that time, he passed it over hastily with an expression of annoyance. Intimately connected in those days with Garrick, his opinion of the great actor is very expressive: "Off the stage he was a little sneaking rascal, but on the stage, oh, my great God."

There was some personal cause for prejudice on Murphy's part, for Garrick refused his first play, *The Orphans of China*, after having accepted it. Murphy also declared that Garrick had cribbed the farce, *High Life Below Stairs*, from one he had himself written and shown to Garrick; and that the fear of detection made Garrick persuade Mr. Townley, a master of Merchant Taylor's school, to acknowledge himself as the author. But in Murphy's *Life of Garrick*, if his opinion of the actor had not changed, it was at least very successfully concealed, for he spoke of him in the highest praise.

Murphy was a man of versatile talents. At one time he held the post of Commissioner of Bankrupts, but finding the work uncongenial, he resigned the appointment; in spite of Lord Eldon's remonstrances he persisted in his final decision, till at length his resignation was accepted, and from that time he gave himself up entirely to literary work.

Unfortunately Murphy had always been something of a spendthrift, and finding that most of his friends were in the same impecunious state, he made up his mind to sell some of his books. So one morning he called upon Mr. Coutts, the well-known banker, and offered him part of his library for three hundred pounds. Mr. Coutts replied that he had little time for reading

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and that he had already as many books as he wanted, but these reasons would not prevent him from granting Mr. Murphy's request. He then very generously sent him a draft for three hundred pounds.

For some years Murphy lived with Miss Elliot, the celebrated actress, whom he first brought before the public. But Miss Elliot found a wealthy lover a better speculation than a poor one; and one day when Murphy returned unexpectedly from the circuit, he was surprised at finding a fine haunch of venison roasting at the fire. As the lady did not usually indulge in such luxuries when she was alone, Murphy made inquiries as to who were the expected guests, and was told that Lord Bristol often visited her, and was expected to dinner that night.

This episode ended Mr. Murphy's connection with the lady, though they always continued friends; and when Miss Elliot afterwards lived under the protection of a member of the Royal Family, Murphy was allowed to visit her, with the perhaps wise understanding that the visits were to take place when her protector was at home. Inconstant as she was, Miss Elliot seems to have had a genuine feeling of affection for Murphy, and wished to leave him most of her property; but he declined the legacy and arranged that it should go to her relations.

The last years of Murphy's life were more prosperous; a relation left him a thousand pounds; he was allowed a pension by the Government; and his *Life of Garrick* brought him in a small income. But he still continued to visit his old haunts, and when in town slept at the Old Slaughter's Coffee-house, where congenial spirits assembled to spend their evenings.

Another person who was perpetually at strife with that "little sneaking rascal," Garrick, was Mrs. Abington, the celebrated actress, who first played Lady Teazle; like Mr. Murphy, she sometimes sang his

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praises, but more often she called him harsh and unforgiving, accused him of speaking ill of her whenever chance came in his way, and of causing her to be attacked in the newspapers. She, moreover, declared this unkind treatment affected her health, and begged to be released from her engagement.

These theatrical luminaries, with their whims and caprices, whom he had by turn to chide or wheedle, must have made poor Garrick's life a burden. He told Mrs. Abington that he had never seen her "theatrically happy for a week together," and that "the writing peevish letters will do no business"; on the back of one of these letters he, by the way, wrote: "that worst of bad women!" This must have been after she had been unusually exasperating, for taking him all round, Garrick was a long-suffering manager.

At this time her salary was twelve pounds a week, with a Benefit, and sixty pounds for clothes; not fabulous riches for a famous actress, but a vast difference to the salaries and other theatre expenses of earlier days. In 1511, for instance, we hear of a play acted on the Feast of St. Margaret, of which the expenses are as follows:

	£	s.	d.
For Players . . . . .	1	4	0
„ Musicians . . . . .	0	5	6
„ John Hobbard, Priest and Author of the Play . . . . .	0	2	8
„ Decorations, Dresses, and Play books .	0	1	0
„ Hire of Place of Performance . . . .	0	1	0
„ Furniture . . . . .	0	1	4
„ Painting Three Phantoms and Three Devils . . . . .	0	0	6
„ Fish, Bread and Ale for Players . . .	0	3	5
„ Four Chickens for the Hero . . . . .	0	0	4

Mrs. Abington once begged Dr. Johnson to attend

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her Benefit. The doctor, though at that time both his sight and hearing were failing, was too kind-hearted to refuse her request, and sat patiently through the performance wrapped up in his own thoughts. A few evenings later, when dining at a tavern, one of the company—Boswell, it is said—thought fit to be facetious and asked the doctor, jestingly, about his late appearance at the theatre :

“ Why, sir, did you go to Mrs. Abington’s Benefit? Did you see? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ Did you hear? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ Why, then, did you go? ”

The doctor replied in the crushing way in which he usually addressed Boswell, and which would have flattened out most people :

“ Because, sir, she is a favourite of the public; and when the public cares the thousandth part for you that it does for her, I will go to your Benefit, too.”

Mrs. Abington’s childhood was spent in very poor and sordid surroundings; her father kept a cobbler’s shop in Vinegar Yard, Drury Lane, but of her mother she had no recollection. From an early age, Fanny was obliged to pick up a living as best she might, at one time running errands for a French milliner, at another selling flowers in the street, where she was known as “ Nosegay Fan.” When about twelve, Fanny supported her father as well as herself by singing or reciting at different taverns; having asked the waiter to tell any visitors that for a small sum of money she would give recitations from Shakespeare and other writers, she stepped upon a table, and from that exalted position she entertained her audience.

But this form of amusement soon palled, and for some years it is wiser to draw a veil over Fanny’s



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mode of life, until indeed she obtained a footing on the stage. It was at this time she first became aware of her want of education, to remedy which, she engaged a writing and a music-master; the latter she afterwards married, and repented at leisure. The person who was perhaps of most assistance to her in her studies, was a Mr. Needham, with whom she lived, a gentleman of great culture and intelligence.

When in Ireland Mrs. Abington took Cork by storm with the piquancy and vivacity of her acting; and, moreover, her taste in dress being recognized by the élite, this once half-clad little child who had sold nosegays in the street, was now actually setting the fashions; the following advertisement was to be seen in the milliners' windows: "Abington caps may be had by those that Need'em," which not only conveyed the fact that Mrs. Abington was setting the fashions, but that she was accompanied to Ireland by Mr. Needham.

The actress divided her lovers into two classes. The first, those who were able to provide her with the luxuries so essential to a woman of her temperament; the second, those who pleased her by their own charms. When she returned from Ireland she became more circumspect, if not in her morals, at least in the way she conducted her amours.

As time passed, this once most piquante actress failed in grasping the bitter truth, that certain characters had become unsuited to her, for we hear a rather pathetic account of her playing Ophelia, looking "like a mackerel on a gravel walk."

In spite of allowing her husband an income to prevent his molesting her, Mrs. Abington should have saved a considerable fortune; but her ambition to mix in fashionable society led her into gambling for high stakes with some old ladies of quality, who were uncommonly skilful in their play. We can picture

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these wrinkled and painted dames, with, no doubt, high aristocratic noses and darting eyes, sweeping large sums of money into their laps, as they egged on their victims to further play.

So great an obsession had Mrs. Abington for her card parties, that she lived incognito, and took a small lodging in one of the passages from Stafford Row, Pimlico, where plants were so cunningly placed in the windows, that they effectually screened the inmates and their doings from all inquisitive eyes. Occasionally she took a small house in Mount Street, where she lived with her servant in the kitchen; and when she emerged from her seclusion, her friends would compliment her on the effects of her "summer's excursion."

Like many others who have led disreputable lives until they have grown too unattractive for further coquetry, Mrs. Abington developed so astonishing a prudery that one day, when calling to inquire after a sick friend, and meeting Taylor in the passage who had come on the same errand, she utterly declined giving the servant her name, insisting that her friend should merely be told that a *lady* had called. This is Taylor's version—possibly the actress had very good reasons for not wishing her name to be given to the sick man.

It might have saved Mrs. Abington a great deal of money and much annoyance had she, before marrying her music-master, taken the advice once given to Mr. John Horne—or "Horne Tooke" as he afterwards called himself, the writer and politician, and author of *Diversions of Purley*, who passed it on to his friend, Mr. Merry, the poet. The circumstances were as follows: Mr. Merry was about to be married, and Horne referring to this marriage said he was once on the brink of a similar disaster, but an old friend gave him the following advice: "You must first," said he,

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“ consider the person of the lady, and endeavour to satisfy yourself that if she has *excited* she is likely to *secure* your admiration. You must deeply scrutinize her mind, reflect whether she possesses a rate of intellect that would be likely to render her an intelligent companion; if you are satisfied that she does, you are to examine her temper, and if you find it amiable, and not likely to irritate your own on any occasion, you must proceed to obtain all the information you can procure respecting her parents and other relations; and if you have no reason to object to their being your relations and companions, you must then inquire who and what are her friends, for you must not expect her to sacrifice all her old connections when she becomes your wife and if you find them agreeable people, and not likely to be burthensome or intrusive, and are quite satisfied with the prospect, you may then order your wedding clothes, and fix the day for the marriage. When the bride is dressed suitable to the occasion, the friends at church, and the priest ready to begin, you should get upon your horse and ride away from the place as fast and as far as your horse could carry you ! ”

Had Mr. Horne eschewed politics as successfully as he eschewed matrimony, he would have been spared many misfortunes. But a man of powerful brain, strong political convictions, and an impetuous temper, is more likely than not to come to grief, and Horne proved no exception; for in consequence of his hot republican views, he spent a considerable time in a wretched cell in the Tower.

Horne's father was a poulterer, who in return for an act of courtesy towards Frederick, Prince of Wales, was granted a warrant for supplying poultry to the Prince's household; this dignity was, however, conducive to honour rather than to profit, for when the Prince died he was in Mr. Horne's debt for a large sum.

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In connection with his father's profession we have an instance of young Horne's ready wit, when a boy at Eton or Westminster. Though the school was largely attended by sons of the nobility, we hear of some particularly ill-bred boys forming a small group and asking one another about the position and circumstances of their respective parents. After a number of well-known people had been mentioned it was Horne's turn to be catechized; he said that he could not boast of any titles in his family, but that his father was an eminent Turkey merchant. As England held at that time a large share of the Levant trade, a Turkey merchant was associated with wealth and importance; so the answer proved a highly satisfactory one.

Horne Tooke was for a time in the Church, but soon renounced "orders" as politics had become the passion of his life. For several years he was the devoted partisan of Wilkes, but the two fell out badly, each accusing the other of hypocrisy. Indeed, Horne Tooke actually sent Wilkes a challenge at the time the great agitator was sheriff of Middlesex; his reply was scornful, to say the least: "Sir, I do not think it my business to cut the throat of every desperado that may be tired of his life, but as I am at present Sheriff of the City of London, it may shortly happen that I shall have an opportunity of attending you in my civil capacity, in which case I will answer for it that *you shall have no ground* to complain of my endeavours to serve you."

Tooke's politics led to an undesired visit to the Tower, but he was acquitted from treason. It is a noteworthy fact that, among other political movements, he was the first Englishman who advocated Free Trade.

Horne had added to his own name that of "Tooke," out of compliment to a merchant of that name, who threw out hints of making him heir to his large fortune,

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to the exclusion of his own nephew, Colonel Harrison, who had offended him. In the most quixotic way, Tooke brought about a reconciliation between the uncle and nephew, and then a curious farce commenced; the old man declaring he would divide his property between the two, yet when one offended him he vowed that everything should be left to the other. So the co-heirs laid their heads together, and made a compact, that, if the entire property was left to one it should be equally divided between the two.

In course of time the wily old merchant was gathered to his fathers, leaving his whole fortune to neither the one nor the other, but to another nephew. This gentleman insisted on dividing his legacy with his "Cousin Harwood," who, in his turn, offered Tooke the sum of eight thousand pounds as a provision for himself and his two illegitimate daughters. Instead, however, of hailing the first available coach, and driving in post haste to secure the money, he allowed a short time to elapse, and when he finally presented Harwood's cheque payment had been stopped two days before.

Tooke's friends were naturally indignant at such treatment, and as there were several witnesses to the gift, he yielded to their persuasions and took the matter into court; and, though so ill that he was obliged to be carried there in his bed, his words proved so convincing that the verdict was given in his favour. One is glad to hear that "Cousin Harwood" lost his money, though it is a little puzzling to understand the point of law which was able to give Tooke his eight thousand pounds.

Another time we hear of him putting in his claim before the Commissioners for the return of his small income, which, after his imprisonment, the authorities were apparently loath to pay; and here we get another instance of his amusing repartee: when one of the



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Commissioners said : " Mr. Tooke, I do not understand you." " Very possibly," replied the former, " but as you have not half the understanding of other men, you should have double the patience."

Although, as we have seen, no advocate for matrimony, Tooke was far from being proof against the attractions of the opposite sex. To his illegitimate daughters who lived with him he was greatly attached. So much could hardly be said for the sentiments he cherished regarding his only son, who was evidently a great thorn in his side; once, indeed, when asked what had become of him, Tooke replied that he did not know, but hoped the next news he heard of him would be that he was hanged!

In addition to his other talents Tooke was a famous grammarian; an Irishman speaking to him about the difficulty of *all* Scotsmen and many of his own countrymen in knowing when to use the word *will* or *shall*, Tooke replied, " It is a matter of taste "; then he added humorously, " but if you wish to make yourself understood by an Englishman, the best rule you can adopt, that I know of, is, when you find yourself inclined to use the word *will*, say *shall*; and when *shall* comes to the tip of your tongue, stop it, and say *will*."

It seems fair, if we are thwarted all our lives, that at least after death our wishes should be respected; yet poor Tooke's great wish to be buried in his garden, and carried to his grave by six of the poorest men in the parish, each of whom were to receive a guinea, was not carried out. His executors considered it a senseless whim, and had him buried after the ordinary orthodox fashion in the family vault at Ealing.



## CHAPTER VI

Charles Churchill—Mathew C. Lewis—Thomas Davies—John Dunton—Richard Cumberland.

A POEM which excited more stir during the eighteenth century than any other of its kind, was *The Rosciad*, a satire in which the author, Charles Churchill, mercilessly criticized the whole of the dramatic world.

Two months before *The Rosciad* appeared, a young man might have been seen night after night, haunting the different theatres, where from the front row of the pit he closely observed every gesture and action of the players. This man was Charles Churchill. But to sell his poem, when it was finished, for even a few guineas, was no easy matter, and it was at length published anonymously at the poet's own risk. That it was destined to create a furore and excite much indignation there could be little doubt; but it was not until the second edition appeared, and the identity of the author was revealed, that the furore really commenced.

Many of the actors, indeed, ignored the poem, and while we are told that Foote was furiously angry, Shuter appears to have made merry with the poet. Those who felt themselves most insulted were loud in their condolences with others who had been parodied: "Why should this man attack Mr. Havard? I am not at all concerned for myself; but what has poor Billy Havard done, that he must be treated so cruelly?" they cried, and so on.

In this hubbub Garrick had a difficult part to play,

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for though *The Rosciad* was loud in praise of certain members of the profession, he alone escaped satire, and this glorified position excited no little envy on the part of his brother actors. An incautious remark of his unfortunately reached Churchill's ears, and in his second poem, *An Apology*, addressed to the "Critical Reviewers," some satirical shafts were aimed at the great actor himself, and an allusion made to his occasional loss of memory. Incensed though the players were at the *Apology*, which was a direct attack on their profession itself, the feeling that this time Garrick had been included in the satire, soothed their outraged feelings. The public viewed the general disturbance in the way people usually regard such matters, when they themselves are not directly interested, with much satisfaction, delighting in the rage of the discomforted.

But it was not the dramatic world alone that called forth Churchill's satire: in *The Ghost*, a poem founded on an absurd imposition carried on in Cock Lane, Smithfield, the part that Dr. Johnson had taken in exposing the fraud did not save him from being satirized under the title of "Pomposo."

" Pomposo, insolent and loud,  
Vain idol of a scribbling crowd,  
Whose very name inspires an awe;  
Whose every word is sense and law;  
For what his greatness hath decreed,  
Like laws of Persia and of Mede.

Pomposo with strong sense supplied,  
Supported and confirmed by pride,  
His comrade's terrors to beguile  
Grinn'd horribly a ghastly smile,  
Features so horrid, were it light,  
Would put the devil himself to flight."

Perhaps, under the circumstances, " Pomposo "

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could hardly have been expected to eulogize the talents of Churchill; but though he compares the poet to a tree which is only able to bear crabs, he adds that it is better to be a tree which produces many crabs than one which is able to produce only a few.

Churchill, who was a devoted admirer of Mr. Wilkes, now associated himself openly with his political opinions and writings, in the publication of the *North Briton*. One day upon entering Mr. Wilkes's room, he found him in the charge of a police officer; and, as suspicions were also directed against himself, serious consequences might have arisen had not Wilkes, with great presence of mind, addressed him as Mr. Thomson: " Good morning, Mr. Thomson, how does Mrs. Thomson to-day? Does she dine *in the country*? "

Churchill instantly took the cue, and replied that Mrs. Thomson was waiting for him, and that he had only looked in for a moment to ask Mr. Wilkes how he did. And, having secured his papers, he hastily left the house and retired into the country.

The son of a clergyman, Churchill had been destined for the same profession, but when he was only seventeen he committed the imprudence of a " Fleet " marriage. The discovery of this secret marriage is said to have been the cause of his being disqualified for Oxford, though there is an improbable story that it was owing to his satirical replies to the questions asked him by the College authorities, and rumour went so wide of the mark as to actually declare that his knowledge of Latin and Greek was deficient.

For a while Churchill and his young wife lived with his father, but expenses increased and it became advisable for him to adopt some profession. We next hear of him in a country curacy, where he used to declare that he " prayed and starved on twenty pounds a year." This desperate state of affairs did not, however, continue, for a few years later, on the death of his father,



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he succeeded him as curate and lecturer at St. John the Evangelist's, Westminster.

Churchill tells us frankly that he would never have taken "orders" from choice, and this fact he very forcibly demonstrates in one of his later poems, in which he alludes to this period of his life:

" I kept those sheep,  
Which, for my curse I was ordain'd to keep,  
Ordain'd, alas! to keep through need, not choice . . .  
Those sheep which never heard their shepherd's voice,  
Which did not know, yet would not learn their way,  
Which stray'd themselves yet grieved that I should stray;  
Whilst, sacred dullness ever in my view,  
Sleep at my bidding crept from pew to pew."

But however uncongenial Churchill may have found his work, whatever secret ambitions he may inwardly have cherished, at that time he fulfilled his clerical duties in the most exemplary fashion. Until, indeed, he renewed his friendship with his school-fellow, Robert Lloyd, a poet of considerable talent. Here, at last, was a kindred spirit, and Churchill's sleeping ambition awoke, and with it a passionate desire for pleasure. But pleasure is invariably associated with gold, and in a short time Churchill was up to his ears in debt, from which he was finally rescued by Lloyd's father, who persuaded his creditors into taking five shillings in the pound; it must, to his credit, be added that they were eventually paid to the full.

In Marsh's *Clubs of London* we hear that Churchill was a "convivial" member of the Beef-steak Club, and that in "a short daylight interval betwixt the flatness of his unexcited spirits and the confusion of positive inebriety," Charles was "radiant." But his indiscretions were too flagrant, and in a short time he considered it more prudent to send in his resignation to this famous club.

Churchill and his wife, who had for long been on

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the worst of terms, now separated. At the same time, owing to the scandal his dissipated habits had caused, he found it advisable to cut himself entirely adrift from the Church. He now dressed as a man of fashion in a gold-laced waistcoat, a gold-laced hat and ruffles. "I have got rid," he says, "of both my causes of complaint: the woman I was tired of, and the gown I was displeased with." In the following month *The Rosciad* took London by storm, and Churchill found all the doors of the literary world open to him.

But his glory was short-lived, for he was only in his thirty-fifth year when he caught a fever and died. And *The Rosciad's* hour was over too; that poem which had been on the lips of one and all, soon sank into comparative oblivion. D'Israeli had thus briefly described its author: "Churchill was spendthrift of fame and enjoyed all his revenue while he lived. Posterity owes him little and pays him nothing."

Matthew G. Lewis—"Monk" Lewis as he was called—after his celebrated novel *The Monk*, made the same rapid ascent to fame as Churchill, though at a much earlier age, for Lewis was not yet twenty when *The Monk* was written. This work, the product of only ten weeks labour, was received with an outburst of disapproval; it shocked the morals and vexed the prejudices of the public. The critic of the *London Review* described it as having "neither originality, morals, nor probability," though he acknowledged that it "excited and will continue to excite the curiosity of the public." And Matthias in his *Pursuits of Literature* attacks Lewis with great violence.

Such a panic, indeed, prevailed lest the book should corrupt the public morals, that in compliance with the wishes of one of the Societies for the Suppression of Vice, the Attorney-General obtained an injunction against the author; the prosecution was, however, for some cause or another dropped.

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But what is condemned by one section of society is usually thought both piquante and desirable by another. At Holland House, Brooks's and elsewhere, Matthias's attack upon Lewis was looked upon as one of the most malicious ever written; and though many kept aloof from him, and staid matrons forbade their daughters to speak to such an abandoned character, Society as a whole folded him in its arms. He was now elected a Member of Parliament, but as a politician Lewis was a failure; upon no occasion did he address the House, and after a short time his attendance there became very irregular. Literature, not politics, was his *métier*, and to literature he now devoted himself; a number of plays and poems being the result.

Few writers have been so free from financial worries as Lewis, for his father, being a rich man, was able to give his son the liberal allowance of a thousand a year. On the other hand, his life at home was a peculiarly difficult and harassing one; for his parents had, after a few years, separated, and when young Lewis was only a school-boy, it fell to his lot to carry messages between the ill-assorted pair, and to give advice to a somewhat foolish mother, to whom he was, however, greatly attached. His father, who seems at times to have shown himself in a most harsh and uncompromising light, on hearing that "Matt" gave five hundred a year to his mother, who had already an ample provision of her own, cut down his allowance for a time to half.

Other sources of dissension now arose between father and son: Lewis bitterly resented for his mother's sake his father's open intimacy with a certain lady, which attitude so incensed his father that "Matt" was finally banished from the house; and it was only on his father's death-bed that a reconciliation between them took place.

Lewis lived principally in a charming cottage at

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Barnes, where most of his works were written. He had also rooms at the Albany, and it was in these rooms that Caroline, Princess of Wales, and Lady Charlotte Campbell put on their masquerade dresses the night they carried out their wild escapade of attending a masquerade *incognito*.

At Inverary Castle, the beautiful residence of the Duke of Argyll, Lewis was always a welcome guest; a new weekly paper was started at the Castle, no doubt at the suggestion of Lewis, called *The Bugle*. This paper came out every Saturday, on the morning of which day several copies were placed on the breakfast table. The magazine was not printed, but written out by the person whose turn it was to be editor, and who kept a letter-box into which all contributions were dropped. It is interesting to hear that one of the contributors was the famous Lord Melbourne.

But Lewis had something infinitely more absorbing than *The Bugle* to occupy his thoughts while staying at Inverary Castle, for he had fallen deeply in love with the daughter of his host. His attachment was not, however, reciprocated; but though the lady afterwards married, her friendship with Lewis remained a staunch and lasting one.

In spite of his popularity in society, Sir Walter Scott and Byron agree that, owing to his loquaciousness, Lewis was a great bore; Byron, indeed, declared that though he was a "jewel of a man he was spoilt by living in a bad set"; a curious remark for this poet to have made! Obviously it was not the case, for to the end of his life Lewis remained the same generous, kind-hearted man.

No doubt he had his follies, and his partiality for the nobility was a source of no little comment to his friends: one of whom speaks of his being "pathetically" fond of anyone who had a title. We are told a story of how, when Lewis was visiting the Duchess

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of York at Oatlands it was noticed that his eyes were red, and his air "sentimental." When asked the cause of his unhappiness, Lewis replied that he was always deeply affected when anybody said anything kind to him, and that in this case it was the Duchess of York. "Never mind, Lewis," said one of his companions, "never mind, don't cry, *she could not mean it.*"

On the death of his father, Lewis succeeded to some estates in the West Indies. It is much to his honour, that though he had not sufficiently advanced to grasp the ethics of emancipation, he did all in his power to improve the conditions of his slaves. In order, indeed, to find out for himself their actual condition, he paid several visits to the West Indies; it was on one of these voyages back from Jamaica that he fell a victim to yellow fever and died.

But the results of his anxious solicitude for his slaves survived his death; for a codicil was found to his will, in which apart from giving many of them their freedom, he left instructions that those who inherited his estate should visit Jamaica three months in every third year, and that they should allow none of his slaves to be sold.

It has been said that Thomas Davies, the clever Jack-of-all-trades, author, actor and bookseller, left the stage at a time when he and his pretty wife were earning five hundred a year, owing to Churchill's attack upon him in *The Rosciad*: "He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone." If Davies were so foolish, one is inclined to agree with Johnson who, in answer to Boswell's observation that he believed the report to be true, replied: "I believe so too, sir. But what a man is he who is to be driven from the stage by a line. Another line would have driven him from his shop." Perhaps on the whole there was more satire than untruth about Churchill's criticism, for it is said



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that there was a dull gravity in Davies' acting, as well as a mumbling sound in his voice.

Although somewhat pompous, Davies was a most entertaining, as well as a most hospitable man, and his tea-parties, held in his back parlour, were largely attended by literary men: this perhaps accounts for Dr. John Campbell's declaration that Davies "was not a bookseller, but a gentleman dealing in books." He was also a popular member of the Booksellers' Club, which held its meetings at the Devil Tavern, Temple Bar, and later on at the Grecian Coffee-house; at which place Davies read aloud portions of his *Life of Garrick*. But it is as the author of *Dramatic Miscellanies* that Davies is best known. Boswell's introduction to Johnson took place at Davies' shop, when, knowing the doctor's prejudice to the Scotch, he begged in his obsequious way that the "literary leviathan" would pardon his being a Scot, adding: "I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it."

It seems a strange contradiction that a man who could be driven from his profession by a few satirical words had yet the audacity to bring out as his own composition, two volumes of *Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces*, the greater part of which contained writings of Johnson's, and advertise them as being written by the author of the *Rambler*. At first Johnson was furious, but he pitied Davies' great poverty; and when speaking to Mrs. Piozzi on the subject, declared: "I will, however, bluster and storm myself a little this time." So to London he went encased in all the wrath he could muster, and on his return he gave the following account of the interview: "I was a fierce fellow and pretended to be very angry, and Thomas was a good-natured fellow, and pretended to be very sorry; so there the matter ended; and I believe the fellow loves me dearly."

And certainly Thomas had cause to love the doctor

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dearly, for when a few years later Davies became a bankrupt, it was Johnson who not only collected enough money to buy back his furniture, but persuaded Sheridan into giving a Benefit for him at Drury Lane. Nothing, however, could save Davies from pecuniary disaster; he died in poverty and was buried by his friends; and it is said that his widow, no longer young and pretty, but weary and faded, ended her days in the workhouse.

The witty and convivial talk exchanged between Davies and his patrons in the old book-shop in Russell Street, Drury Lane, would have commended itself to his brother bookseller and predecessor, the somewhat eccentric John Dunton. According to Dunton's father, the rector of Graffham, in Huntingdonshire, John was too volatile to follow the traditions of his ancestors by becoming a minister, he was therefore apprenticed to a bookseller.

There is no denying that John had his faults: his love for truth was sadly circumscribed, his thirst for learning almost nil; upon one occasion we hear of him, in company with some other lads, relieving some neighbour of his fruit. He, moreover, well-nigh distracted his relations by swallowing a leaden bullet; and another time, by half choking himself over a bearded ear of corn. But these seem to have been about the sum total of his misdemeanours, though magnified by uncompromising relations and later on by himself, into heinous sins.

No doubt the somewhat puritanical teaching of John's early days heightened his imagination; for he tells us how he always pictured Death as a walking skeleton, a dart in his right hand and an hour-glass in his left; in spite of which he yet felt fully persuaded that this grim spectre could eventually be "squared," by being given what Heine would call, figuratively speaking, a "pourboire." His early training of retro-

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spection probably fostered John's self-absorption and precocity; for we hear that at the age of thirteen he was consumed by a secret passion for a damsel who lived in his father's house, and that in silence and despair the love-sick boy brooded over the tender words his tongue refused to say.

When his schooling was over John was, at the age of fifteen, apprenticed to a well-known bookseller with whom he lived on excellent terms, and for the first time he developed a love of books. All went smoothly indeed until the young apprentice became enamoured of a certain Susannah S——, a boarder in the bookseller's family; an incident which his master in no way relished, and Susannah was promptly returned to her friends. It was not long before a similar incident occurred; for while listening to the exhortations of the Nonconformist preacher, Mr. Doolittle, John beheld for the first time the beautiful Rachel Seaton, and received a "mortal wound." Love-letters and assignments at Mrs. Dawson's dancing-academy followed, but, although we are told no details, the romance apparently gradually fizzled out.

At the end of seven years, Dunton celebrated the "funeral" of his apprenticeship by giving a feast to his friends; an entertainment which he afterwards describes as "vanity and expense": it must undoubtedly have been expensive, for no fewer than a hundred apprentices apparently turned up. He now set up as a bookseller, and, funds being somewhat restricted, he took half a shop, a warehouse, and a "fashionable chamber." His ambition was, however, to become a publisher, and religious works at this time being in great demand, his first attempts at publication were on this subject, and won him great reputation. In later days it was Dunton's proud boast, that out of six hundred books he had published, only seven were failures, which unlucky volumes

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he strongly advised all those who had copies to burn.

His friends now became anxious to provide the young bookseller with a wife. The first lady suggested was Sarah Day, whom he was assured had neither thought nor done any "mischief" since the hour she was born. But while pondering and doubting, a second lady was suggested, who completely put the first in the shade. This second lady was Sarah Doolittle, daughter of the preacher; one of this lady's special qualifications was that she owned a father as famous for his writings as for his sermons, who would certainly make over his copyrights to his son-in-law. But with even these inducements the heart of Dunton remained adamant, nor when a third Sarah was recommended, Sarah Briscow—although he admitted that she was handsome, rich and religious—did he evince more ardour.

One day, however, the young bookseller strayed into a meeting-house, and his roving eyes fell on a lady, the daughter of Dr. Annesley, who, to borrow his own words, "charmed me dead." It turned out, however, that this enchantress was already affianced to another; Dunton's friends, however, persuaded him to keep his wooing in the family by transferring his affections to her eldest sister, Elizabeth, who a few months later became his wife. But "Elizabeth" was altogether too commonplace a name for the romantic young bookseller, so the more poetic one of "Iris" was substituted, while he described himself as her "languishing Philaret." On the wedding-ring were inscribed the quaint words:

"God saw thee  
Most fit for me."

Dunton now took a large house and shop, at the Sign of the Black Raven, in Gracechurch Street, and, in spite of his former flirtations, made a most devoted

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husband to "Iris"; while "Iris" proved so capable in learning to manage the business affairs of her "Philaret," that he was left at leisure to turn author on his own account, and wrote voluminously on politics and other subjects. Amongst others, he published *Maggots*, a series of poems written by his brother-in-law, the celebrated John Wesley, at the age of nineteen.

But trade declined, and other worries were vexing the soul of Dunton; so he took a journey to New England, for the purpose of opening a warehouse for the sale of his books; and, having accomplished this object to his satisfaction, as well as seeing something of the life and habits of the Indians; not to mention forming various platonic friendships with "maids and widows," he returned to London. But destiny had devised one of her playful surprises; for, instead of now leading a life of undisturbed connubial bliss with Iris, he found himself so persecuted by his brother's creditors, for whom he had stood security, that for ten months he dared not venture out of his house unless disguised. Such a state of affairs was unendurable, and Dunton set out for a trip in Holland, Germany, etc., until his financial embarrassments had subsided.

Nine years after his return to England, poor "Iris" fell ill and died; and the grief-stricken bookseller tells us in his Memoirs, how he not only provided her with a "handsome" funeral, but furnished mourning for no less than twenty of his own and her relations. A few months later, however, the faithless "Philaret" was pouring forth rapturous words into the ears of a second wife—yet another Sarah, by the way—declaring "she seemed to be his first wife in a new edition, corrected and enlarged, or rather, in a new binding."

But the details of this marriage are sordid and commonplace: quarrels with his mother-in-law, who declined to invest some property in the bookseller's



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business, while "Valeria"—the poetic name given by Dunton to his second wife—accused the bookseller of marrying her for her money, and of laughing at her expense in company with his "maggotty printers"! The upshot of it was, that Dunton went over to Ireland to sell his books by auction, where he became embroiled in a silly feud with a rival bookseller. His affairs now went from bad to worse; we hear of his hiding from numerous creditors, and his petition for a pension from George I being refused; presently the name and reputation of the great bookseller had ceased to exist.

Richard Cumberland, the contemporary of Churchill, is said to have been more prolific in the number of plays he produced than any other playwright. Cumberland's early days were chiefly spent at the home of his grandfather, the famous Dr. Bentley, who delighted in organizing the games of his little grandchildren; he even went so far as to lend them books filled with illustrations of dissected bodies!

Whether little Richard revelled in these gruesome illustrations or no, they do not seem—and it was perhaps as well—to have kindled in him the smallest desire to read what they were about. Indeed, so strong an aversion had Richard from the alphabet, that when his lesson was set before him, although he acknowledges that he read it over to himself, he refused to utter a word. This obstinacy did not prevent his drawing his own conclusions upon the various subjects brought before him in his lessons. On hearing the description in the Psalms of the heathen idols, who had eyes and saw not, and ears and heard not, the idea seemed to him so preposterous, and combined with certain other contradictions, so completely upset all his preconceived ideas, that he kept a stolid silence and declined to discuss such a flagrant cock-and-bull story.

Nor, when at six years old, Richard was sent to school at Bury St. Edmunds, did he show any

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increased disposition for learning, for he allows that his idleness was so great that the only thing in which he excelled was "the art of sinking," by which art he invariably arrived at the bottom of the class. No doubt this deplorable state of affairs would still have continued, had not the head master, Dr. Kinsman, who was an intimate friend of Dr. Bentley, given young Richard such a sound rating before the whole school, that he was shamed into a determination to mend his ways; and after a while, and in spite of every effort on the part of his schoolfellows to dislodge him, he kept his place at the head of the school.

It had been customary for the scholars at Bury St. Edmunds to act a play before the Christmas holidays, but for some reason or another this custom had been abolished. Young Cumberland, however, and some of the other boys at one of the boarding-houses, learnt up the *Tragedy of Cato*, to which the "gentry" of the town were bidden. The performance must have been suggestive of a farce rather than a tragedy, for we are told that "Marcia" was an "ill-favoured, wry-necked" boy who "towered above her sex," clad in garments borrowed from the maids of the boarding-house. The play was without doubt uncommonly ill-acted, which did not, however, lessen the applause nor the good humour of the company, and the boys felt mightily pleased with themselves. It was, however, a very different matter next morning, when the young actors were ordered by Dr. Kinsman to go through one or two of the scenes of the performance before the whole school; and so ill did they acquit themselves that the unhappy "Marcia" was ridiculed unmercifully, while the other performers were humiliated by being given impositions.

From Bury St. Edmunds, Cumberland went to Westminster, and from there to Cambridge, where, in spite of severe illness, brought on by overwork, he

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took honours. But in agreement with his father's wishes, though against his own inclination, for he would have preferred the life of a scholar, he left Cambridge to act as private and confidential secretary to Lord Halifax. A life of seclusion and study little fitted Cumberland for the polished circles in which he now mixed, whose ruling gods were ceremony and etiquette. He tells us how upon one occasion he waited two hours to be presented to the Duke of Newcastle, his audience lasting about two minutes, during which time the Duke, stripped of his shirt and his sleeves tucked up to his elbows, was busily engaged in washing his hands!

Cumberland gained little profit by his long attendance upon Lord Halifax. His words, in regard to men who have risen to the front ranks, are rich in suggestiveness: "Every great, rich and consequential man, who has not the wisdom to hold his tongue, must enjoy his privilege of talking, and there must be dull fellows to listen to him; again, if by talking about what he does not understand, he gets into embarrassments, there must be clever fellows to get him out of them; when he would be merry, there must be witty rogues to make him laugh; when he would be sorrowful, there must be sad rogues to sigh and groan and make long faces; as a great man must be never in the wrong, there must be hardy rascals who will swear he is always in the right; as he must never show fear, of course he must never see danger; and as his courage must at no time sink, there must be friends at all times ready to prevent its being tried."

Lord Halifax, possibly with a lurking feeling that he had not treated Cumberland over well, offered him a baronetcy; he declined that honour, feeling it but an inadequate return for his faithful services. Altogether Cumberland seems to have been badly treated, for not only was he passed over by Lord Halifax when a coveted

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under-secretaryship fell vacant, but when, in later years, he undertook a secret mission in Spain, which proved unsuccessful, he was never able to recover his expenses from the Government, which amounted to over four thousand pounds. In consequence of this financial loss, Cumberland was obliged to sell the estate of his forebears, and finally retired to Bath on a very inadequate pension.

Among his numerous plays, the *West Indian* is considered to be Cumberland's best production. Not only, it is said, could he not endure to hear the work of another praised, but he was so sensitive as regards any criticism on his own work, that Garrick called him a "man without a skin"; and he was caricatured by Sheridan as "Sir Fretful Plagiary" in the *Critic*. This satire is, however, declared to have been written in revenge for Cumberland having desired his children not to laugh at the first night of the production of the *School for Scandal*, and that Sheridan observed: "He ought to have laughed at my Comedy, for I laughed heartily at his Tragedy."

In his Memoirs, Cumberland gives an amusing description of how Oliver Goldsmith's friends pledged themselves to make his play *She Stoops to Conquer* a success on the first night of its appearance. Having previously assembled for an early dinner at the Shakespeare Tavern to arrange their plan of campaign, they then hastened to the play-house, and posted themselves in different parts of the theatre. Among their numbers were the two Burkes and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Dr. Johnson, who sat in a side box, took the principal part in the conspiracy, all eyes being fixed upon him, and when he laughed the others followed suit.

Now this little coterie had secured a perfect gem for an affair of this kind, in the person of Adam Drummond. The neighing of the horse of the son of Hytaspes was, we are told, but a whisper in comparison to his laugh,

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while the whole thunder of the theatre was not sufficiently loud to drown it. In one point only was Adam sadly lacking; he had not the smallest perception when the psychological moment had arrived for his applause. This failing he frankly owned to his friends, and Cumberland undertook to sit by his side and give him his cue. But though at first the signals were correctly followed, Adam's mirth so overpowered him, that he imagined jokes in almost everything that was said. The attention of the audience was naturally attracted by his boisterous laughter, the pit showed signs of being offended, and for a while the fate of the play lay in the balance; but it eventually won the day, and no doubt Adam deeply repented, and craved pardon of Goldsmith and his friends for so nearly having been their undoing.



## CHAPTER VII

Samuel Ireland — Dr. Parr — Duchess of Gordon — George Steevens.

THAT giant of impostors, Samuel Ireland, the Shakespeare forger, made every other aspirant to literary imposture appear as an amateur. From the time his father, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Shakespeare, took his young hopeful on a visit to Stratford-on-Avon, the boy was possessed of but one idea—how the world could be cheated into believing that he had stumbled upon some genuine relics of the famous bard.

Fate seems to have entered into the conspiracy, by placing him in a profession where he had access to old deeds and charters, and by throwing into his path a bookseller who showed him a preparation by which he could produce ink that had every appearance of being old. One of his earlier impostures was a letter from Queen Elizabeth to Shakespeare; another was a legal transaction which was supposed to have taken place between Shakespeare and several other persons.

The way Ireland manufactured the old string with which the papers were usually tied is worth relating. This difficulty had perplexed him for a long time; but one day as he was passing through some apartments of the House of Lords, his eye was attracted to some old and ragged tapestry, a few threads of which were half unloosened, and he knew his problem was solved; contriving to detach a small fragment of the tapestry, he drew out the worsted thread and bound it round the documents.

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But it soon became necessary to offer some explanation as to how the documents, etc., came into his hands; the myth of a rich old gentleman was therefore introduced. This personage, it was declared, had, in course of conversation with Ireland in a coffee-house, shown a voracity for antiquities, and not only invited him to inspect his collection of old papers, but with astonishing generosity offered him any of these which took his fancy.

This explanation naturally caused some surprise, and numberless questions were asked, but Ireland's answer had already been prepared; while perusing these documents, he had come across one which confirmed the claim of the old gentleman to some disputed property; what more natural therefore than that out of gratitude Ireland should be given the Shakespeare manuscripts. That such a story could be credited seems to us amazing, but so does every imposture—after it has been exposed.

Ireland now invited a number of well-known people to inspect the manuscripts, most of whom were convinced of their authenticity. An amusing story is told on this occasion of how Boswell, exhausted after a prolonged reading of the papers, asked for a glass of warm brandy and water, and, while it was still in his hand, fell on his knees and kissed the manuscripts, thanking God that he had lived to witness so great a discovery. A certificate was then signed by Dr. Parr and many others, stating their belief in the genuineness of the manuscripts; yet a few experts, like Professor Porson, looked—and doubted. Malone, who had studied thousands of old documents, went further than Porson, and wrote a book in which he attempted to prove that the supposed discoveries were fakes; one of the points which had most keenly aroused his suspicion being the extraordinarily affected style of the spelling, vowels and consonants trebled and

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multiplied, and all jumbled up together. For example, when Shakespeare is supposed to be addressing his mistress, he writes: "Dearesste Ann Hatherrawaye."

Emboldened by success, Ireland now announced the discovery of a new blank-verse play, *Vortigern and Rowena*, to which Shakespeare's signature was attached. This announcement, of course, created much excitement, and Sheridan agreed to produce it at Drury Lane, paying Ireland two hundred and fifty pounds down, and half the profits after thirty pounds had been reached. It is doubtful whether Sheridan really believed in the authenticity of the play, as he is said to have declared that Shakespeare must have been drunk when he wrote it; from his point of view it was purely a speculation, a matter for the public to accept or reject; if they accepted it, all the better for Sheridan.

As to Joseph Richardson, he declared: "It would be a canister tied to Shakespeare's tail to all succeeding ages, or remain a recorded monument of the dramatic taste and critical discernment of England at the close of the eighteenth century."

There was, however, much delay in the production of the play, and Ireland grew increasingly impatient. Kemble, who was to take the principal part, began also to have his suspicions, and at the rehearsal both Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Palmer resigned their parts on the plea of ill-health.

At last the night of its production arrived: the theatre was crammed, many notable people being among the audience. Ireland and his family occupied a prominent position in one of the front boxes. At first all went well, and the audience, though beginning to realize their expectations had been unfulfilled, listened with patience and decorum. But the bald language at length produced such mirth, that deafening laughter, followed by cries of derision, rang through the house;

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having borne this humiliation for some time Ireland and his family vanished from the theatre.

Thus fell with a heavy crash this structure of deception, built of rare ingenuity, observation, and patience. To many the dénouement must have caused mortification at their want of discernment—it nearly killed Ireland's father. The poor old man refused at first to believe the truth; and when he could no longer doubt, Ireland having published his confessions to contradict false rumours that his father was implicated in the forgeries—he became so embittered that he never forgave his son; who, far from feeling the smallest shame, took a keen pride in his deceptions and complained that he had been badly treated by the public! Though no one can deny that he was a great rascal, all must admit that in Ireland's frauds there was a touch of genius.

Among those who believed most firmly in the authenticity of Ireland, was Samuel Parr, the great scholar and divine. It had been ordained that he should become an apothecary like his father, but Samuel set his face strongly against a profession which he cordially detested. It is scarcely probable, indeed, that he would have made a successful physician; for not only did he regard operations with horror, but some of his moods, we are told, would have terrified ladies of delicate nerves!

He appears also to have paid more heed to the Latin of prescriptions than to the drugs they contained: upon one occasion, when called upon by his father to compound a prescription, he pointed out an error in the genitive case of the Latin, a criticism which called forth a sharp: "Sam, d—n the prescription, make the mixture." On the other hand, Parr had always had a leaning towards the Church; the idea of having it all his own way in the pulpit was doubtless very alluring to one of his self-opinionated disposition.

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As a child he delighted in playing at " Church "; and his sister tells us, that when their cousins spent their holidays at this parent's house, he always expected them to form part of his congregation. A bell tied to the banisters was tolled by the one of the party who officiated as clerk, and Parr, arrayed in one of his father's white shirts, then pretended to read the service, which was generally followed by a sermon. His sister and cousins were of the opinion that Samuel was unnecessarily long-winded, and certainly they could not have had much of a look in, for upon these occasions, as upon most, the little despot invariably took the lead and even expected his cousins to call him " Uncle."

Small wonder is it, therefore, that his sister confessed to a feeling of great satisfaction—regarding it as an act of Divine justice—when her brother caught small-pox at the age of twelve, and completely lost the beauty for which he had received so much admiration.

When Parr's schooldays were ended, he became for some years Assistant Master at Harrow; but when, upon the death of the head master, he failed in obtaining the vacant appointment, he set up a school of his own at Stanmore, where he was followed by about fifty of his old scholars.

Some of his theories were distinctly original: he encouraged pugilism, arranging that the scene of warfare should be pitched where he could have a good view from his study window. Once, " Old Parr," as he was usually called, went into his garden, where he found all his flowers had vanished, and in their place were the heads of his boys, peeping out; William Coke, one of his scholars, having played a practical joke on the doctor by planting out the boys in this fashion. Another time, we hear of his boys acting a Greek play in the original language, the scenes of which were arranged by Foote and the dresses by Garrick. But, for one reason or another, the school proved a



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failure; its near proximity to Harrow caused endless ructions, and Parr showed his prejudices far too openly to become really popular; so, after his first batch of pupils left, the school deteriorated and was finally abandoned.

In the meantime, Parr had embarked on the troubled waters of matrimony; he required, his friends said, a housekeeper, and they found him a wife who required a home; the result of this marriage of expediency could not have been a greater failure. The lady had been brought up, as she herself expressed it, in "rigidity and frigidity" by two maiden aunts; and although, no doubt, these qualities have their uses, they hardly appealed to Parr, who, in spite of his vanity and self-opinionativeness, was a man of warm and generous feeling. To make matters worse, his wife possessed considerable skill in showing up his follies and peculiarities, in fact she was a perfect vixen.

No doubt the lady, too, had her trials, for she describes her husband as having been "born in a whirlpool and bred a tyrant": moreover, his love of pomp and ceremonial made him at times supremely ridiculous. Upon one occasion he rode to Warwick from his house at Hatton in a most fantastic costume; his coat ill-concealed his dressing-gown; on his head was an enormous wig and a clerical hat, and he wore one spur put on over a boot stocking. At other times he was seen "stalking through the town in a dirty striped morning gown"; but all eccentricities may be pardoned in a man who was one of the finest scholars of his time: "He has," observes Archdeacon Butler, "left a chasm in English literature which none of us shall ever see filled up."

A good story is told of how one day, when in company with Burke, Fox and Sheridan, Parr began freely criticizing the speeches made by Fox and Sheridan on the Warren Hastings' trial. Burke, who had also made

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a speech, evidently considering himself neglected, walked up and down the room, expecting every moment to hear his own name mentioned in the criticism; at last he could no longer remain silent, and observed that he supposed the reason for excluding his name from the discussion was because Parr had no fault to find, adding that undiluted praise was fulsome. "Not so, Edmund," replied the doctor. "Your speech was oppressed by epithet, dislocated by parenthesis, and debilitated by amplification."

Although Parr may have been exempt from these particular blunders, neither his voice in speaking nor his handwriting were beyond criticism; and Lord Holland used to lament that the doctor could not more easily communicate his great knowledge, for when he spoke no one could tell what he said, and when he wrote no one could read what he had written.

Parr had one pet vanity—his wig; having promised to preach two sermons at Birmingham, he wrote the following letter to his friend, the Reverend H.: "You must assist, not in making sermons but in procuring a wig. Therefore, without delay, step down to Mrs. Bathurst's and inquire of her servant where my old barber lives, for I forget his name. It is just by. Bid him directly put my largest wig into curl, fence it with *plenty* of paper, and enclose it safe, safe, safe in a wooden box."

But apparently four days had passed and still no wig appeared, for we find Parr again writing: "Vain will be the silken cassock, vain the swelling scarf, vain the snow-white band, vain all my metaphysical reasoning, vain all my *vernacular* eloquence, yea, vanity of vanities will they be without my wig."

At the end, however, of five days, Parr writes that, just as he was sending a letter to "carry" to Warwick: "to our surprise and our wonder and our astonishment and our delight . . . behold a box and in it a wig."

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But, alas ! all was not yet well, for we are told that when the wig was brought out of its box at Birmingham, that which was to have given the final dignity to the whole was spoilt by the clumsiness and ignorance of the packer; for the top of the wig, instead of being smoothed and round, was so deformed and ruffled that it resembled nothing so much as "the feathers of an outraged hen."

The doctor had a disconcerting way of calling attention to people, possibly in the middle of reading the lessons: "Show that lady and gentleman into my pew, Sam," he once said to his servant. Sam and the doctor took opposite views in politics, and many were their heated discussions.

Parr was one of the warmest adherents of the unfortunate Queen Caroline. When the King ordered her name to be struck out of the liturgy, he recorded his feelings upon the subject in the prayer-book of Hatton—that though it was his duty to read the commands of his sovereign it was not his duty to express his approbation of what he condemned.

No sketches of the eighteenth century would be complete without some mention of the eccentric Jane Maxwell, afterwards Duchess of Gordon: masterful, fearless, unflinching alike in her opinions and in disregard of conventionality, yet hardly lovable. It would have been interesting to hear the impressions of the gentleman, distantly connected with the family, as he suddenly beheld the spectacle of Jane as she emerged from Wyndford Close, Edinburgh, mounted on the back of a monstrous fine pig, while her sisters were thumping it vigorously with a stick. It appears that whenever the young ladies were sent to the well to fetch a "kettle" of water, they invariably kept their eyes open to see the first moment when the animals were let loose from the yard, so that they might enjoy a ride. Moreover, we are always given to understand that the

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animals in question were no common pigs, such as might be seen in the High Street, but altogether of a superior breed, belonging to a certain Peter Ramsay.

Dukes are only mortal, and when the Duke of Gordon heard a young girl whisper to a friend, behind his back: "How I should like to become Duchess of Gordon," and, on turning, saw a young and very attractive girl—what more natural than that he should forthwith obtain an introduction to her, and that a little later he should ask her to become his wife.

Some twenty years earlier Miss Nicky Murray was the celebrated Directress of the Edinburgh Assemblies. They sound forlorn and rather depressing pleasures to us now, but people contrived to get some amusement out of them then, more especially those five or six couples chosen by providence, in the person of Miss Nicky, "to walk the minuet" or take part in the country dances.

The weakest part of these entertainments was the music, which is well described by one of the performers, who, it must be owned, was not in high favour at the time: "There's Geordie Menstrie, he plays rough like a man sharpening knives wi' yellow sand. Then there's Tammie Corrie—his playing's like the clappin o' mince collops, sic short bows he takes; and then there's Donald Munro—his base is like wind i' the lum (chimney), or a toon cart gaun down the Blackfriars' Wynd."

It is a tradition that, on hearing the name of any young lady for the first time, Miss Nicky, who was prompt in all things and had no belief in taking chances, would immediately ask: "Miss——of what?" Should the answer be vague and devoid of possibilities in the nature of an estate, "however poverty-stricken," Miss Nicky turned her back and took no further interest.

Robert Chambers, in his *Traditions of Edinburgh*, gives us many interesting descriptions of these Assemblies. The dancers were in a railed-off space in the

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centre, while the spectators were seated outside this magic circle, and the Lady Directress sat on a sort of throne at one end of the room. The method of drawing partners was a curious one: the fans of the ladies were placed in a gentleman's cocked hat, and the owner of the fan each one drew, remained his partner for the season.

One can well understand that these strict rules were evaded when possible, by the swains taking surreptitious peeps into the contents of the hat. They had, on the whole, their work cut out for them, for they not only had to secure tickets for each ball, giving a particular position in the dancing-room, but to provide *oranges* for their fair partners.

It must have been a picturesque sight to watch the cavalcade of ladies in their progress down those quaint old streets, on their way to the Assembly Rooms; and we can see Susannah, Countess of Eglington (she, by the bye, was specially distinguished as being the only person in Scotland who, at the age of eighty-four, was so delighted by Dr. Johnson's conversation that she bestowed a chaste salute upon the great man), and her seven beautiful daughters, who, arrayed in full ball dress, saque, feathers, etc., were "carried" to the Assembly Rooms in eight sedan chairs.

But, impressive as this sight must have been, it was nothing compared to the return journey, when every chair was illuminated by flaming torches; beside each chair walked a gentleman holding his hat in one hand and a drawn sword in the other, to guard the ladies from possible peril until they reached the safer neighbourhood where the aristocracy lived. It is only to be regretted that the gentlemen usually returned to the dancing-rooms, where they drank the health of their particular fair lady so often, that, when morning dawned, it was no uncommon thing to find the floor strewn with unconscious forms.



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As late as 1746, Oliver Goldsmith tells us that the first set of regulations from the Records of the Assembly Rooms of Edinburgh to be hung up in the hall was :

*“ No lady to be admitted in a night-gown and no gentleman in boots.”*

The eighth rule appears to have been :

*“ No misses in skirts and jackets, robe-coats, nor stay-bodied gowns, to be allowed to dance in country dances, but in a sett by themselves.”*

By the time, however, that the Duchess of Gordon became the leader of fashion in Edinburgh, many of these quaint customs had died out. Her appearance at court created a great sensation, her dress being made out of tartan cloth, the wearing of which had been forbidden since the Battle of Culloden ; but the Duchess was a law unto herself and cared naught for any prohibitions.

Upon one occasion she succeeded in wheedling the parsimonious William of Callendar to give a grand ball at his country mansion, which for once resounded to the strains of Neil Gow's band. Another time, when Sir William Nairne was promoted to the Scottish Bench, the Duchess asked the learned man what title he proposed to assume ; on being told it was Dunsinnan, she replied : “ I am astonished at that, my lord, for I never knew you had begun sinning ! ”

As well as her social duties in Edinburgh, the Duchess had a special coterie in London for the Tory party. A warm adherent of the starched Queen Charlotte, and Pitt ;—Mr. *Pett* as she pronounced him, being her beau-ideal, it was natural that she should cordially detest the Prince of Wales and his friends ; and as thinking and speaking were one and the same thing with her, it cannot be supposed that they had much good to say of her.

We hear that at her receptions at her magnificent house in Pall Mall, the Duchess herself acted as

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“ whipper-in ”; for she would autocratically send for members of Parliament, and by dint of reasoning and persuasion secure them as faithful adherents to the Government. The Great Seal of Scotland was afterwards conferred on her husband, as a mark of appreciation for the enthusiastic zeal of the Duchess.

Not only in politics did she show her indomitable persistency but in her matrimonial schemes, and from the time her five daughters were budding young things, she determined they should make brilliant marriages. It was only to be expected that she tried to capture Mr. Pitt for her eldest daughter, Charlotte, an attractive girl of eighteen, and took her to drive to Wimbledon at the hour he was likely to be there. And Pitt, it would seem, showed himself in no way averse from the match, and bestowed some small attentions on the lady. But a spoil-sport came along in the person of Lord Dundas, who, wishing to prevent his friend Mr. Pitt from forming an alliance which would give the Duchess a certain maternal control over the great statesman, paid his own addresses to Lady Charlotte: and Pitt, who had never been deeply enamoured of the lady, immediately ceased his attentions, as did Lord Dundas, when he found his object had been attained. Lady Charlotte eventually married Colonel Lennox, who afterwards became the Duke of Richmond.

Among other eligible suitors, the Duchess cast a matrimonial eye upon Mr. Beckford of Fonthill Abbey, a recluse of great wealth, and determined to swoop down upon him at Fonthill and secure her prize. But she did not know the shrewd character with whom she was dealing, for although a recluse he was no fool, and was perfectly well aware of her intentions. Moreover, he considered her schemes too outrageous for common decency, and on receiving a hint of her projected visit he determined to play her a trick.

Preparations on the most magnificent scale were

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made for her reception, and after Beckford had given instructions, he retired with a pile of books into his special sanctum. On the arrival of the Duchess, Beckford's major-domo informed her that his master was seized with one of his sudden fits of seclusion, and that at such times no one dared to disturb him. The Duchess, feeling she was at such near quarters to her prey that it was not possible he could elude her, bore these tidings with perfect good humour. Next morning she inquired: "Do you think Mr. Beckford will be visible to-day?" The answer was vague, unsatisfactory—"it was possible," and would her Grace like to see the gardens?

But as day after day passed and no Mr. Beckford appeared, her Grace grew bored with the gardens, and exasperated at the same answer she received each morning as to whether Mr. Beckford would be visible. Nothing was lacking in the way of luxurious entertainment; but at the end of seven or eight days the Duchess left Fonthill Abbey in a fury of rage, and her son-in-law—who was not to be—came out of his hiding and declared that he had never enjoyed a joke so much. But although this particular big fish refused to be landed, the Duchess contrived to find husbands for her "brood" of daughters, among the number were no less than three Dukes!

We do not hear of any special matrimonial schemes arranged for her sons, but after putting the eldest into the army, she conceived the ambitious idea of making him the founder of a regiment. "Letters of Service" were granted him, after which he and his mother started on a recruiting campaign to all the fairs in the neighbouring country.

On this crusade the Duchess wore a bonnet nine inches high, made of blue silk velvet, with a red, green and white dice border, while over her habit she wore a scarlet coat: how the villagers must have gaped with

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open eyes and mouth at such a startling apparition. But the Duchess knew what she was about, and that the kiss she gave each young fellow who took the shilling, inspired him with patriotic enthusiasm; many hundred enrolled themselves under her banner who lived—or died—to make their country proud: to this enterprise we owe the celebrated 92nd, or Gordon Highlanders.

The Duchess had many staunch and devoted friends; such men as Lord Kames and the Honourable Henry Erskine. Moreover, she was a kind friend and patron to many a humble man of letters; among whom were Creech, the famous Edinburgh bookseller, Allen Ramsay, etc.; and it is amusing to hear that “Robbie” Burns, the ploughman poet, made his debut at the New Assembly Rooms under her wing, where, as one can well believe, he was hardly a success.

Yet, there is no denying that the Duchess, with her love of rule and the unscrupulousness with which she attained her ends, must doubtless have been rather a terror as a wife; she was described by Lord Fife as “this terrible woman,” and “perfect divle.” But it is painful to hear of her leaving Gordon Castle to “the bloodsucker,” as she called the pretty country wench who supplanted her in her husband’s affections, and whom he afterwards married. From that time the Duchess led a restless wandering life, sometimes in London, sometimes at her house at Kinrara, wrangling with her relations and not even on speaking terms with her husband, whom she pelted with bitter and resentful letters.

Her death took place at the Pultney Hotel, in London, and is thus mentioned by one who had known her well: “So the great leader of fashion is gone at last—the Duchess of Gordon! Her *last party*, poor woman, came to the Pultney Hotel to see her coffin. She lay in state three days, in crimson velvet; and she

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died more satisfactorily than one could have expected. She had an old Scotch Presbyterian clergyman to attend her, who spoke very freely to her, I heard, and she took it well."

But it seems more befitting the memory of this remarkable woman to take a step further, and follow her in the long journey from London, where she died, to Kinrara where, according to her special request, she was buried. This journey took twenty-three days. A large number of Highlanders followed the coffin for the last ten miles; and a train of gentlemen, whose hearts had been conquered by her fascinations, dissolved into tears, as, surrounded by the grandeur and silence of the mountains, the proud Duchess was laid to rest.

Although not accused of tearing out leaves from State Letters like Mrs. Macaulay, George Steevens, the famous Shakespeare commentator, has been very widely accused of literary impositions. Lord Mansfield declared that he could only believe half of what he said, to which Johnson added that no one knew which half it was; yet, formerly, the doctor had been one of Steevens' dupes, and considered the assistance he rendered him in the re-publishing of his (the doctor's) *Shakespeare*, of great value. He described him as "an ingenious gentleman," which he certainly was; and introduced him as a member of the Literary Club. There is no doubt that Steevens was a colossal reader, especially of the early writers of literature; he moreover remembered what he read, but apparently truth was quite an insignificant matter to this "ingenious gentleman."

A favourite method of the commentator's was to announce some startling discovery in the evening papers, as when he invented a marvellous story of the extra-vicious upas-tree in Java, which destroyed all life, human or otherwise, within a radius of about sixteen miles. A Dutch traveller was mentioned as his



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authority, but the works of the latter contain no allusion to this vegetable monster!

One of Steevens' greatest impositions was giving Dr. Birkenhorst leave to publish in his work on English authors in the *Biographia Literaria*, a choice letter by George Peele; but the compilers of the *Biographia* were so unreasonable as to wish further information as to the source from whence the letter was derived. With the most delightful *naïveté* Steevens replied: "Whence I copied this letter I do not recollect," though he recollected perfectly that the *Theatrical Mirror* held the forged letter, for the very good reason that he had placed it there himself; he moreover made the disastrous blunder of dating it 1600, which was exactly two years after the death of Peele!

The Society of Antiquaries appears to have been generally considered fair game to those whom it in any way offended. Now this particular society had refused to give Steevens four rare plates of Hogarth in exchange for four books, an incivility which Stevens was not slow in resenting. Having procured a block of marble, he engraved upon it by means of aqua-fortis, some Anglo-Saxon letters, and had it placed in a shop window in Southwick; at the same time signifying to the Society of Antiquaries that the marble had been dug up in Kensington Gardens, and was the tombstone of no less a person than Hardicanute.

It seems strange indeed that this learned society was so gullible that it fell headlong into the trap; an engraving was made of the stone and published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*; the deception was, however, finally discovered.

Another "flim-flam," supposed to have originated from Steevens, is a highly-coloured life of Milton, in which he gives the following deeply romantic reason for the poet's first desire to travel in Italy. Two foreign ladies, passing in their coach, saw Milton lying under

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a tree, and immediately alighted to gaze at the sleeping youth; the younger lady, the usual vision of loveliness, wrote some lines on a piece of paper, which she slipped into the hand of the sleeper. As these particulars could hardly have been seen even by a god, were he sleeping, some friends of Milton's had now to be introduced as witnesses to this touching scene.

Steevens goes on to say that when the poet awoke he found *four verses* addressed to those "human stars," his own eyes! After this romantic episode it was only to be expected that Milton started immediately in search of this fair unknown, and we are given to understand that it is to this lady we are indebted for the most impassioned touches in "Paradise Lost"!

But again Steevens blundered, for the whole story as it stands, including the *four verses*, is told by Marguerite Eleanor Clotilda, a French poetess of the fifteenth century, in one of her poems; the heroine of the romance being that lady's own great-grandmother!

The son of a captain in the East India Company's fleet, George, after he left Cambridge, took chambers in London; but a house near the top of Hampstead Heath offered more attraction to one of his eccentric and cantankerous nature, and he settled there for the rest of his life; a cousin and her daughter keeping house for him. Although some authors regard Steevens as a much maligned person, even in private life, he showed very objectionable traits. He was, moreover, so fickle in his friendships that not content with suddenly standing aloof, with no apparent reason from those with whom he had been most intimate, he would even attack them in print. So malicious and petty a mind had he, that one of his favourite amusements was writing libels about his neighbours, and throwing them over the garden wall, not because they had in any way particularly annoyed him, but from sheer love of causing annoyance.

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Murphy also tells a story of Steevens which shows him in anything but an amiable light : after the successful performance of one of Murphy's plays, Steevens called upon the playwright, who had been away for some time, and asked him whether he had seen the unfavourable criticism on his play in *St. James's Chronicle* ; Murphy replied that he had not. A day or two later Steevens again called and alluded to the same article, appearing so disappointed at Murphy's lack of interest, that the latter began to suspect him of being the author.

As soon, therefore, as Steevens had left, Murphy went to the office of the *St. James's Chronicle*, and having asked to see the original article, he immediately recognized it to be in the handwriting of Steevens. The latter denied the accusation and the matter was then referred to Dr. Johnson, who, considering the defence a feeble one, declared that in future Mr. Steevens must be ostracized.

The doctor evidently never saw cause to alter his opinion, for when, during his last illness, his black servant told him that Steevens had called to ask for him, Johnson demanded : " Where is he ? "

" On the outside of the street door," was the reply ; to which the doctor answered :

" The best place for him."

For some years before his death, Steevens lived the life of a recluse. It is said that his last moments were full of despair, and his language more voluble than choice : Dibden, indeed, compared his death-bed to the finale scene in *Faust*.

## CHAPTER VIII

Dr. (Sir John) Hill—Samuel Derrick—James Quin—Thomas Arne.

ANOTHER person with whom the Antiquarian and other learned societies were chronically at feud, was Dr. Hill, better known as Sir John Hill. If any of us, for our sins, have been compelled to toil through his seventeen massive volumes on botany, it is probable that they have already heard more of him than they desired, but we who have been spared this grievous experience, find him an interesting, though unprepossessing study.

Hill began life as apprentice to an apothecary, and served in that capacity until he was able to start a small shop on his own account. But dosing people with pills and emetics soon palled, and he began to study botany. For a time he was employed by Lord Petre and the Duke of Richmond in the arrangement of their botanic gardens in Essex and Surrey; and by their generous assistance he was enabled to carry out his wish of travelling to many distant countries, in order to procure certain rare plants, which he dried by a special process of his own.

The bulky work before alluded to was the result, and in due course it was presented to the King of Sweden, who, in return for such a delicate attention, invested him with the order of "Vasa." From that time Hill blossomed forth as "Sir John," and though the Herald's College would hardly have deigned to recognize such a title, it was ambrosia and nectar to the doctor, who was a desperately vain man. Finding,



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however, that though the publishing of bulky volumes might be productive of a decoration it was certainly not productive of hard cash, Hill turned his undoubted talents into fresh channels; plays, romances, travels and sermons flowed freely from his versatile pen. Booksellers employed him to write works, which we are told, are only produced by those chosen spirits who are permitted "glimpses of the moon," men of extinguished ambition and sullen intelligence!

The doctor's conceit was colossal; upon one occasion, when George III was present at a theatre, a stage compliment was paid to him on his patronage: this was Sir John's opportunity of making himself conspicuous, and, rising from his seat in the adjoining box, he made a profound bow to His Majesty.

Cowardly as regards his person, when it came to wielding his pen Hill was a holy terror, for he quarrelled with everybody and indulged in the greatest vindictiveness. No wonder the different scientific societies, owing to his waspish propensities, would have no truck with him, and sent him to *coventry*; out of revenge Hill turned them into ridicule; the Antiquarians were "medal-scrapers" and "antediluvian knife-grinders." The Conchologists he called "cockel-shell merchants," and the poor Naturalists he proclaimed as "pedlars of prickle-backs and cockchafers."

But, apart from these sarcasms, Hill upon one occasion distinctly scored off the Royal Society! It was at the time when the "tar-water" craze as a panacea for all diseases, was at its height: one day the Royal Society received a letter from a sailor, who said that, in consequence of a fall from the mast, he had fractured his leg, but after treating it for three days with tar and okum, he was able to walk as well as ever. The Society felt sceptical, in the first place, as to whether the leg had ever been broken at all, and in the second, as to whether no other remedies



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had been used; in any case it seemed incredible that under any circumstances it could be cured in three days. So further details were demanded, which led to a correspondence between the society and the sailor, until a most naive postscript at the end of the sailor's last letter brought the matter to an abrupt close: "I forgot to tell your honours that *the leg was a wooden one.*" It is hardly necessary to say that the letters were dictated by Hill.

Although the doctor had long given up the practice of medicine, he spent considerable time in preparing balsams and cordials from herbs grown in his garden in Bayswater. One wit wrote of him:

"Thou essence of dock, of valerian and sage  
At once the disgrace and pest of this age;  
The worst that we wish thee for all of thy crimes,  
Is to take thine own physic, and read thine own rhymes."

An amusing story is related, how Hill told one Penneck, who was hobbling down the street, that the tincture of Barduna was a certain cure for gout. A fortnight later the doctor had the misfortune to be seized by a severe attack of the same complaint, and the much greater misfortune of encountering Penneck at the door of the British Museum. As the doctor was struggling to get out of his carriage, with grave sarcasm, Penneck observed: "Doctor, let me recommend the tincture of Barduna to you as a sure specific."

Apparently Hill was in greater request among the opposite sex than among his own, for he married more than once. His second wife was the sister of Lord Ranelagh, who exerted considerable interest on Hill's behalf; and on the accession of George II, Kensington Gardens were placed under his care, a post said to be worth two thousand a year. The death of the doctor in 1775 caused no regret, for he was an essentially

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unlovable person. As an instance of the dislike he inspired, Horace Walpole, on being defended by Hill against some adverse criticism in the *Critical Review*, declared that he could pardon him any abuse but he could never forgive his *friendship*.

In answer to the following pamphlet by Hill, "A Petition for the Letters I and U to David Garrick, Esq.," in which both letters were imagined to be complaining that the actor often banished them from their rightful positions, such as the word *virtue*, which they declared he spelt *vurtue*, and the word *ungrateful* was turned into *ingrateful*, Garrick wrote the following satirical lines :

"If 'tis true, as you say, that I've injured a letter,  
I'll change my note soon, and I hope for the better,  
May the right use of letters, as well as of men,  
Hereafter be fixed by the tongue and the pen :  
Most devoutly I wish they may both have their due,  
And that *I* may be never mistaken for *U*."

When the miscellaneous writer and poet, Samuel Derrick, was living in a second-floor attic in Shoe Lane, Holborn, we read of him as paying occasional visits to John Taylor's father at his cottage in Highgate, where, being of diminutive proportions, he was able to take a nap in the family cradle, his feet resting on a chair.

This was the time when he lived with Mrs. Lessingham, the actress, whom he had trained for the stage. But the lady hankered after diamonds and fine dresses, and soon abandoned her diminutive lover and his attic near the heavens; years later, when his affairs were in a more prosperous condition, he called upon her, wishing to renew his acquaintance, but the little man received such a snub that he departed in all haste.

[There was a charming *savoir-faire* about Derrick in those days. One evening, having quitted his attic

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indefinitely—for the very good reason that he had no money, to pay for it—he found himself near the docks, and for want of a more luxurious couch he fell asleep upon a hulk. An equally impecunious author who was wandering aimlessly about the streets, spied out his old acquaintance and woke him; upon which Derrick exclaimed: “My dear Floyd, I am sorry to see you in this destitute state, will you go home with me to my *lodgings*? ”

One of Derrick’s poems was upon his entering the harbour of Dublin, his native city, after many years absence, and began :

“Eblana! Much loved city, hail!  
Where first I saw the light of day.”

Then, after pondering solemnly on his being “numbered with the forgotten dead,” he continued the following lines :

“Unless my lines protect my fame  
And those who chance to read them cry :  
‘I knew him! Derrick was his name,  
In yonder tomb his ashes lie!’ ”

John Home, the author of the tragedy *Douglas*, wrote a very witty parody on this poem :

“Unless my deed protect my fame  
And he who passes sadly sings,  
‘I knew him! Derrick was his name,  
On yonder tree his carcase swings.’ ”

Through the interest of his friends, who made the most of his talents, Derrick became, on the death of Beau Nash, Master of the Ceremonies at Bath and Tunbridge Wells, where he thought himself no end of a fine fellow. Unfortunately other people do not seem to have shared his opinion; in the original Bath Guide of 1817 he is described as being “so small and pusillanimous in his appearance, that it was next to

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impossible for him to command respect," and the same writer goes on to say that for about five years "this diminutive apology for a master of the ceremonies hopped about our rooms and streets in a white hat, for in that respect he imitated his great predecessor (Beau Nash), when death put a period to his weak and transitory powers."

But in spite of his insignificant appearance, Derrick was so absurdly vain that when he had blossomed forth as a man of fashion he always made his footman walk behind him, and would constantly cross the street with the man at his heels so that there could be no mistake about it.

There were many cheap taverns in those days, but it would have been hard to compete with the moderate charges of a tavern in Liverpool, mentioned by Derrick in some published *Letters* to the Earl of Cork about this time, when "for tenpence a man dines elegantly at an 'ordinary' consisting of a dozen dishes."

Owing to his personal appearance and lack of ability, the "little Monarch of Bath" was for a short time deposed. James Quin, the actor, who had considerable interest in such matters, was partly responsible for this: "My lord," he said to a certain nobleman who asked his advice, "if you have a mind to put him out, do it at once, and clap an extinguisher over him."

But Derrick had a certain shrewdness, and though in the heat of the moment he had written some satirical verses at Quin's expense, he came to the conclusion that to minister to the actor's epicurean tastes would better serve his purpose. If there was one delicacy that Quin preferred above all others, it was John dory. Derrick, therefore, wrote to a friend at Plymouth, begging him to send as many and as fine John dorys as could be crammed into the chaise; these he presented to Quin, whose heart was so melted by the present that he used his influence on Derrick's



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behalf, and the "little Monarch" was once more restored to his throne.

It is not surprising that the heart of Quin was melted by Derrick's gift, when we hear that if his servant who called him in the morning broke the melancholy news that no John dory could be procured in the market, Quin would turn himself over in bed, and say: "Then call me to-morrow morning." In order to really appreciate this fish, he always declared that one "should have a swallow from here to the antipodes, and palate all the way." Yet with the most bare-faced contradiction Quin always declared that angling was a most barbarous sport, arguing thus: "Suppose some superior being should bait a hook with venison and go a-Quinning, I should certainly bite, and what a sight I should be, dangling in the air!"

With such epicurean tastes Quin would certainly have found fault with Derrick's tavern at Liverpool: but although no mention is made of "John dorys" by Peter Wilkie of the New Inn, Aberdeen, this gentleman seems to have anticipated all men's needs, judging by his menu in 1789.

A convivial fellow was Quin; it afforded him infinite satisfaction, when he and his friends foregathered at some rowdy festivity, to make everyone drunk. Now there was a certain parson who prided himself on being able to drink more than anyone else. Quin had no liking for parsons, and when he met this particular gentleman at one of their carousals he determined to be a witness to his fall. Bottle after bottle was emptied and one guest after another succumbed, but Quin, who was not a whit more sober than his companions, just managed to keep in his chair, where he evidently took a nap. When he awoke he saw the prostrate forms of his friends reclining on the floor, but the parson was not among them, so Quin came to the conclusion that he had been removed and put to bed. What was his



27 Aug  
1785

# PETER WILKIE, NEW INN, ABERDEEN.

		L.	S.	D.
To	TAPPIT HENS			
To	Magnum Bonums			
To	Bottles Claret - -			
To	Bottles Oporto - -			
To	Bottles Zerry -			
To	Bottles Burgundy			
To	Bottles Champagne -			
To	Bottles Madeira -			
To	Bottles Lisbon -			
To	Bottles Orange Wine -			
To	Mutchkins Punch -			
To	extraordinary Fruit and Sugar	"	2	6
To	Mugs Porter -			
To	Oysters - - - -			
To	Cyder - - - -			
To	Negus - - - -			
To	Sack-whey - - - -			
To	Tea and Coffee, Marmalade, &c.			
To	Sago - - - -			
To	Drams - - - -			
To	Beer - - - -	"	"	1
To	Pipes and Tobacco - -			
To	Entertainment - -	"	3	
To	Paper - - - -			
To	Cards - - - -			
To	Cadies - - - -			
To	Lodging - - - -			
To	Entertainment & Drink to Servants			
To	Chaise Hire - - -			
To	Corn - - - -			
To	Hay - - - -			
To	Grease - - - -			
To	the Smith - - -			
To	the Barber - - -			
To	the Hofiter - - -			
To	me : Punch - - -			
To	me Wine - - -			
To	Broken - - -			
Wm. Wilkie			5	10
			6	4

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mortification when, on looking out of the window, he saw the parson bathing his head under the village pump!

Quin's history was a strange one; his mother was supposed to be the widow of a trader in the West Indies, who disappeared for seven years, at the end of which time the lady put on mourning for a year, when she ceased to mourn, and married Quin's father. But there was trouble brewing in the household of Quin, for one day husband number one reappeared and claimed his wife. When the elder Quin died, he left his property to his son, but another claimant turned up; not a husband this time, but a man who proved that he was the lawful heir and that James was a bastard; so from a life of pleasure and extravagance at the Temple, poor Quin was forced to find some way of earning a livelihood, and he turned his attention to the stage.

Although he had two formidable rivals in Booth and Macklin, it was not until Garrick appeared on the scene that the real struggle for supremacy began. At first Quin treated Garrick with contempt: "he is a new religion, the people follow him as another Whitefield, but they will soon return to church again," and Garrick, when he heard of this sarcasm, replied by an epigram:

"Thou grand infallible, forbear to roar,  
Thy bulls and errors are rever'd no more;  
When doctrines meet with general approbation,  
It is not heresy, but reformation."

But people flocked in ever greater numbers to see Garrick—Quin's popularity was on the wane; it must have been a painful moment when he realized, to use his own words: "If this young fellow be right, then *we* have all been wrong," and the voice of the public soon proclaimed that *they* were all wrong. But any ill feeling that had existed between the two actors soon

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vanished, and in later years whenever Quin came to London he always paid his successful rival a visit at his villa at Hampton.

Like many of his kind, Quin had a keen sense of humour which was often disconcerting to the "other person." The guest who helped himself to an unusually large slice of bread when dining at a "public ordinary," must certainly have felt himself much disconcerted when Quin stretched out his hand to take it, and on matters being explained replied politely: "I beg your pardon, I took it for the loaf."

In those days quarrels were usually only preludes to blows; and the death of two men must be laid to Quin's account, but in both cases he seems to have acted merely in self defence. Though passionate and fiery enough when he was once roused or had drunk too deeply, Quin was in other respects the kindest-hearted man in the world. Hearing, one day, that a certain obscure actor was in a state of absolute destitution, he put together a decent suit of clothes and hastened to his garret; finding the poor fellow lying on a wretched bed overcome with despair, he said: "Now, Dick, how is it you are not at rehearsal?" Dick slowly dressed himself in the clothes brought by Quin, and then asked in a hesitating way what he should do for a little ready money to carry him on for the next few days. Quin replied that he had already done what he could for him, and he must now look in his own pockets for the money; in one of them Quin had, in the most delicate way, slipped ten guineas.

Nor was this the only case of Quin's generosity, for hearing that Thomson, the poet, was in a sponging-house for a debt of seventy pounds, he went to pay him a visit. This was rather embarrassing to poor Thomson, who had carefully guarded the secret of his poverty; but he was still more embarrassed when Quin said he had come to sup with him, knowing that it

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would be impossible for him to scrape enough money together to get a decent meal. To his relief, Quin went on to say that as probably there would not be time to prepare a supper, he had ordered one at a neighbouring tavern. When supper was over, Quin said it was now time to settle accounts between them, that having had so much enjoyment from the poet's work he felt the pleasure could not be estimated at less than a hundred pounds; and before the astonished Thomson had time to say a word, he laid down a note for that amount, and hastily left the room.

A feud was at one time declared between Quin and Sam Foote, and when peace was again restored, Foote said that Quin had made one speech which had always rankled in his mind: "You said I had only one shirt, and that I lay in bed till it was washed." "I never said it," replied Quin, "I never said it, and I'll soon convince you that I never could have said it—I never thought you had a shirt to wash."

Like his rival, Macklin, Quin considered that long pauses were essential for giving force to certain passages in his acting, but occasionally they led to very contrary results. When Quin was acting the part of Horatio in *The Fair Penitent*, and was challenged to meet Lothario the following morning—"a mile among the rocks"—he took so long in saying, "I'll meet thee there," that an impatient man in the gallery shouted out: "Why don't you give the gentleman an answer, whether you will or no?"

At this distance of time when we can only read what others have seen; when all those who helped in making the stage at that time so brilliant have passed away, it is difficult to imagine without a smile Quin and Mrs. Pritchard playing the characters of Charmont and Monimia, at an age when neither were young, indeed Quin was at least sixty and weighed some twenty stone; yet in Quin's declaration: "Two

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unhappy orphans alas! we are," their acting was so perfect that there was not a smile on a single face among the audience.

Managers, no less than actors, are difficult people to tackle, and Quin, after a quarrel with his manager, Rich, left London in a fit of ill-humour; when, however, his wrath had somewhat subsided, he condescended to write: "I am at Bath—Quin." But Rich evidently did not consider this communication sufficiently conciliatory and replied: "Stay there, and be damned!—Rich." Enraged at this curt reply, Quin vowed he would never again enter into an agreement with Rich; nor did he, with the exception of going up once a year to play for his friend, Ryan's, Benefit, until he had the misfortune of losing his two front teeth, when he retired from the stage.

The last years of his life Quin spent entirely at Bath; when recovering from an attack of gout he would crawl out to see his old friend Gainsborough, the painter, and, rapping at the door, ask in his blunt way: "Is old Grumpus at home?" When asked to enter, he seated himself in a chair with his foot on a stool, while the painter, leaning on his maulstick, inquired in the orthodox Bath medical phrase; "*Secundem artemwell*, how is toe?" Quin died in this place of healing waters, and his words the day before his death are full of pathos: "I would wish that the last scene were over; and I hope I may be enabled to meet and pass through it with dignity"—his wish was fulfilled.

Like Mrs. Abington, Dr. Thomas Arne, the eminent composer, was perpetually sparring with Garrick. Upon one occasion Garrick wrote to the doctor: "I have read your play and rode your horse; and do not approve of either," and he endorsed this flattering note: "Designed for Dr. Arne, who sold me a horse, a very 'dull one; and sent me a comic opera, ditto."







THOMAS A. ARNE

A CARICATURE BASED ON A DRAWING BY F. BARTOLOZZI, R.A.

*National Portrait Gallery, London.*

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Arne was the son of the well-known upholsterer in King Street, Covent Garden, at whose house the four Indian Kings lodged in the reign of Queen Anne, an account of whom it is worth making more than passing mention. After these Kings had returned to their own country, a small bundle of papers was found in their lodgings, written by King Sa Ga Yean Qua Rash Tow, from which we are able to gather a few of their impressions regarding some of the sights and customs they found in England. The origin of St. Paul's Cathedral sorely puzzled their minds, but while the King of the Rivers believed it to be the work of the great God to whom the building was dedicated, two of the other Kings were of the opinion that it was produced the same day as the sun and moon. On the other hand, Sa Ga Yean Qua was inclined to the belief that it was fashioned with some of the curious tools and implements of which the island had many varieties. That this building had once been used by the natives for some form of worship many hundred years before, this King had little doubt, observing they still held the seventh day as sacred. But that any form of worship still existed Sa Ga Yean Qua was very sceptical, for when he visited their "holy house," he noticed that the behaviour of those present bore no indication of devotion. "It is true," he observed, "that a man dressed in black and mounted above his fellows, held forth vehemently about something, but those below seemed mostly occupied in bowing and curtsying to each other, while many slept."

From the same source we hear that two gentlemen had been appointed by Queen Anne to attend upon and act as interpreters to the strangers. These gentlemen, the Indians quickly perceived, were frequently of diverse opinion. From one, they learnt that the island was infested by a race of monsters, who took the form of men and were called Whigs; it was greatly

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to be hoped, this gentleman said, that the strangers might not encounter these monsters, who having so particular an aversion to kings might knock them down. The other gentleman described a race of equally dangerous and formidable animals called *Tories*, who under similar circumstances might act towards the strangers in the same unmannerly way as the Whigs, not, however, because they were kings, but because they came from a foreign land. On the whole the Indians were, however, of the opinion that these animals were mere fictions, invented by their interpreters to amuse the strangers.

The dress of their brothers in England was regarded with great disfavour by the kings, who pronounced it "barbarous"; it would almost appear, they declared, as though these men wished to strangle themselves about the neck, and the number of wrappings round their bodies no doubt accounted for many of their curious diseases; while instead of decorating their heads with beautiful feathers they bought huge masses of hair, which fell down their backs in a large "fleece," and of which they seemed as proud as though it grew on their heads.

As for the women, they would indeed, said Sa Ga Yean Qua, be visions of loveliness, were it not for the little black spots which are inclined to break out on their faces, and are of so peculiar a nature that if one disappears on the forehead in the morning, it may quite possibly reappear on the chin at night. There is, on the whole, little question but that the Indians returned home mightily pleased with their own country, more especially when contrasting it with the island they had visited.

To return to Arne; his father had higher ambitions for his son than his own upholstering business, so young Thomas was sent to Eton, where his school-fellows complained that he plagued them night and day



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by playing on a common cracked flute. Apparently this particular branch of study did not appeal either to Arne *père*, for when Thomas left Eton and was placed with a lawyer, in order to be coached in the legal profession, we hear that his musical studies were strictly tabooed. This injunction did not, however, deter young Arne from taking lessons on the violin, as well as on harmony and composition; and having contrived to smuggle a spinet into his room, he muffled the strings with a handkerchief, and practised while the rest of the household were asleep.

One of Arne's greatest delights was the opera, and many a time did he, disguised in the livery of a servant, find his way to the upper gallery, which was always reserved for domestics. But a day of reckoning came when Arne's little wiles were discovered; it happened in this way: his father chanced to be calling upon a gentleman, and hearing that his friend was receiving company, he sent up his name and was invited to join the party. A concert was in full progress, and Arne's astonishment was only equalled by his rage at finding that his son was playing first violin. It was impossible, however, to ignore the young artist's real talent, and after a short time Arne consented that his son should devote himself to music. As well as working at his own studies, Thomas now assisted a young brother and his sister Susanna in their music; and so successfully did he train his sister, that she became an opera singer and afterwards, to her undoing, married Theophilus Cibber, an unmitigated rascal.

However sensitive an ear Arne may have had for music, he does not seem to have been troubled with delicate nerves; for one day he was found by his violin teacher practising in the warehouse, his violin stand resting on a coffin. The professor declared that were he in Arne's place he could not play a note, as he should always be imagining that the coffin contained



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a corpse. "So it does," said Thomas, opening the coffin, and no power of persuasion would ever induce the affrighted professor to pay his pupil another visit!

Arne's two most famous works were his adaptation of Milton's *Comus*, and the opera of *Artaxerxes*; he also wrote a number of songs for Vauxhall and other public gardens, perhaps the best known of these being *Rule Britannia*, and *Where the Bee Sucks*. Arne was a frequenter of the Bedford Coffee-House: he is said to have been the only man who wore a velvet coat in the dog-days. The musical authority, Dr Burney, evidently considers these lighter works to have had a deteriorating effect; for, in describing Arne's setting of Metastasio's drama of *Olimfuade*, he complains that the composer had written too much for indifferent singers and audiences to be able successfully to represent the highest taste of the opera-house. "He could speak to the girls in the garden," he said, "but found little to say to good company." In appearance Arne was very thin; he had, moreover, a particularly red face, which caused Mortimer, the painter, to make the unflattering comparison that "his eyes looked like two oysters, just opened for sauce, put upon an oval side-dish of beetroot."

UNDER THE ESPECIAL PATRONAGE OF HIS MAJESTY,  
**ROYAL GARDENS, VAUXHALL.**



## **A GRAND DAY FETE**

WILL BE GIVEN

**NEXT TUESDAY, May 30, 1837,**

ON WHICH OCCASION THE

## **ROYAL VAUXHALL NASSAU BALLOON**

WILL MAKE ITS ELEVENTH ASCENT.

The unparalleled and wonderful Voyage performed by this Stupendous Machine, last Autumn, has caused such numerous descriptions of the whole Apparatus to be published in every quarter of the globe, that it now becomes quite unnecessary to repeat them. The Balloon will be conducted by Mr. GREEN; and there will be Seats in the Car for Ten Persons—Ladies, 10 Guineas; Gentlemen, 20 Guineas.

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During the winter the Gardens have been considerably altered and improved; and with a view to render them fit for Day Entertainments, the Hermit Walks are now ornamented with Plantations, Statues, New Scenery, &c. &c., and the Balloon Ground has been so arranged as to accommodate 25,000 Persons to witness the inflation and ascent of the Royal Balloon without inconvenience, for which purpose the Promenade is considerably widened, and a shrubbery, with several large trees removed.

A CONCERT will be given in the open Orchestra, including several favourite Comic Glees.

The FINE BAND of the SURREY YEOMANRY, as well as a Full QUADRILLE BAND, will attend.

The ITALIAN WALK—in which has been added several new Statues, will be thrown open the whole afternoon, and the View of the BAY OF NAPLES exhibited.—A variety of other Entertainments.

The Doors will be opened at Two o'Clock, and the Balloon will start at Five.

**Admission, 2s. 6d.**

Refreshments of all kinds to be had in the Gardens.

**The Gardens will be opened for the Season on Monday, June 3.**

Balne, Printer, 38, Gracechurch-street.

# Public Breakfast

## AND MORNING CONCERT,

### CREMORNE GARDENS, CHELSEA,

Wednesday, July 15th, 1846.

Nothing can equal the splendour of this Monster Entertainment. It will bring to the mind's eye, through the vista of the past, the bright scene of the Opening of RANELAGH. All the selections spoken of in the records from the Catech and Glee Clubs, with the Music of DR. ARNE, will be performed by the Grandest Vocal and Instrumental Concert ever introduced, to public approbation. The whole conducted by MONSIEUR LAURENT, Jun.—a Gentleman whose musical fame is too well known to the public to need commentary here.

The BREAKFAST, consisting of Chocolate, Coffee, and Tea, Fruit-cakes, Marmalade, and other delicate preserves, with substantial cold Joints, Lobsters, Pastry, Ices, and, indeed, every delicacy of the Season, will be laid in the Large Banqueting Hall; the Monster Band performing in an Orchestra expressly erected for this Entertainment, in the Arena opposite the side opening of that elegant and spacious Chamber.

Dances of the period, and in the Costume of the time of Ranelagh's Zenith, will be performed by a number of accomplished *artistes*.

In the evening, the Gardens fronting the Mansion will be magnificently illuminated on a novel principle, and the Festivities of the Day will be wound up by a Grand Ball.

The Galleries of the Banqueting Hall will be thrown OPEN FREE to Ladies and Children, to witness the Dancing and other Performances, over which a view can be commanded.

The Proprietor wishes it most expressly to be understood, that the intention in giving this peculiar Entertainment, is to form, as nearly as can be, a Picture of what RANELAGH formerly was.

**The same Music, the same Glees, the same Songs, the same Choruses, the same Dances, the same Costume,**

as performed and exhibited at RANELAGH ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO. At intervals the sturdy chairmen of olden time will be seen bearing the Sedan, and setting down at different parts of the Gardens, Ladies of quality and Gentlemen of distinction.

To make the matter more interesting to Children, in the course of the day and evening several old-fashioned, grotesque and other Dances will be performed by LITTLE GIRLS and BOYS possessing surprising talent.

Doors open at Three o'clock. The Public Breakfast will be laid from Four till Seven o'clock. Admission, Two Shillings and Sixpence. Children, One Shilling. HALF-PRICE AT HALF-PAST SEVEN O'CLOCK, ONE SHILLING. Double Ticket Four Shillings; Ticket to admit Three, Five Shillings and Sixpence; Ticket to admit Six, Ten Shillings. Breakfast Ticket, Three Shillings. These Tickets may be obtained of any respectable Librarian, Musicseller, or Confectioner, in the metropolis.

To prevent public inconvenience from pressure of numbers, a limited number of Breakfast Tickets have been issued. It will at once be seen, that by this arrangement Mr. Ellis will be the better enabled to judge of the number he will have to supply; and the comfort and approbation of those Ladies and Gentlemen who honour him with their presence being of course his paramount consideration, he will endeavour, by ensuring the one, to deserve the other.

Cremorne Gardens can be reached from any part of town by Omnibus for Sixpence, by Steam-boat for Fourpence. Illuminated Steamers, upon this occasion, from the Cadogan Pier, as late as Eleven o'clock.

The Magnificent Grounds, Park, Maze, Shrubberies—the Banqueting Hall, its superb and lofty Galleries—the newly-erected Lavender Bowers, and the Million and One natural attractions of this truly Noble Domain, are thrown open to the Public, for Promenade and Inspection, every Sunday, at Half-past Four o'clock. No charge is made for admission, but every visitor is expected to take a Refreshment Card to the amount of Sixpence.

N.B.—The Public are most respectfully requested not to pick the flowers, or tread on the borders of the beds.

**PUBLIC DINNERS.**—MR. ELLIS begs to direct the attention of gentlemen having to cater for Club Dinners and Annual Celebrations, to a view of the newly-erected Banqueting Hall, in the Park of Cremorne, capable of dining 2,000 persons. Also, to the superbly-furnished and well-appointed Rooms in the Mansion, for large and small Dining Parties. Everything on a scale of excellence and economy unmatched in the history of modern gastronomy.



## CHAPTER IX

Charlotte Cibber—Mrs. Miller—Thomas Holcroft.

AMONG the “freaks” of the eighteenth century, Charlotte, the youngest child of Colley Cibber—Poet Laureate and Patentee of Drury Lane—and sister-in-law to the unhappy Susanna Arne, may take a foremost place.

If her memoirs, which she dedicates to herself, can be relied upon, Charlotte was an egoist almost from infancy. At the age of four we hear of her marching about the fields of Twickenham long before the household was astir, arrayed in her brother’s waistcoat, her father’s “tye-wig,” while a pinned-up dimity coat of her own served as pantaloons. In this grotesque costume she “rolled” herself into a dry ditch, and was found several hours later bowing right and left to a group of astonished spectators. Her exit was hardly a dignified one, as she was carried home on the shoulders of a footman!

When Charlotte was eight years old she was sent to Mrs. Draper’s well-known school in Park Street, Westminster. Here among other studies, she laboured, until wellnigh distraught, over geography and the globes, arriving at the conclusion that that study was not “altogether necessary for a female.” We are furnished with few details in regard to her school life; although it would be interesting to know whether her schoolfellows were always content to pipe to her music, or whether they left her severely alone. That she was chronically at loggerheads with prim governesses may

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be taken for granted. Charlotte only remained about two years at Mrs. Draper's select establishment; her studies afterwards being continued by masters at her parents' home at Uxbridge.

It was here that she first adopted the mannish ways which afterwards so distinguished her, being seldom seen without a gun over her shoulder, which she used for the purpose of slaying any unwary game which came within her reach. This pastime came to an abrupt conclusion owing to a certain "strait-lac'd" neighbour, who declared that shooting was unbecoming—if no worse—to any self-respecting maiden, and Charlotte was deprived of her gun.

We next hear of a rather severe illness, after which she was packed off to the house of a cousin, one Dr. Hales, with the combined object of being restored to health, and initiated into sewing and other useful accomplishments; for the doctor's female relations were past-mistresses in embroidery, and in decorating an "elegant" table. A vain hope indeed on the part of Charlotte's parents, for none of these commendable qualities appealed to Charlotte. But if any trouble was brewing in the stables between the grooms and their underlings, it might be taken for granted that Charlotte would be in the thick of it. Her only other distractions were riding round to make inquiries as to how the doctor's patients were progressing, and acquiring a smattering of medicine.

After two futile years had passed, the doctor's "lady" died, and Charlotte was returned to the parental roof-tree. She now coaxed her father into letting her set up a small dispensary of her own, where she prescribed for all the paupers in the parish. Fortunately she had sense enough to consult secretly such books as were written by Culpepper, and other well-known authorities. But instead of dispensing her own concoctions, she bought, from an apothecary's



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widow at Uxbridge, a "cargo" of drugs. In due course the widow sent in her bill, which, to his supreme disgust, Charlotte's father was called upon to pay. After this incident the dispensary was closed.

When very young, Charlotte conceived a violent passion for a musician named Charke, but however satisfactory the courtship may have been, the marriage was a total fiasco. And Charlotte declares that she spent the first year of her married life, "from morn to eve," in raking out her musician from every low haunt in Drury. And after her child was born they parted by mutual consent.

Charlotte now turned her attention to the stage: her relations had expressed a wish that her identity should be concealed under the pseudonym of "a young gentlewoman who has never appeared upon any stage." But Charlotte had far too exalted an idea of herself and her talents to permit this; and hiring a hackney coach, she drove round to all her acquaintances to tell them that the "young gentlewoman" was no less a person than herself.

In a life of Colley Cibber, written by himself, he mentions that his daughter, Mrs. Charlotte Charke, wrote a dramatic piece called *The Art of Management or Tragedy Expelled*, which was performed once at the concert room in York Buildings; that it was a satire upon Charles Fleetwood, the manager of the Theatre Royal, but that that gentleman contrived to have it withdrawn.

After some years Charlotte forsook the stage and went into business, her life becoming more and more disreputable: at one time she set up as a grocer and oil merchant in Long Acre; another time she kept a puppet-show over the tennis-court in St. James's. We even hear of her acting as valet to a nobleman.

On the death of her husband, Charlotte re-married—or said she did; but declared that she had taken

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the most solemn vows never to reveal the name of this mysterious person, who soon afterwards died. Charlotte's financial affairs now became more desperate than ever; and before long she found herself in a sponging-house, from whence she was rescued by some disreputable acquaintances.

A story is told that she once paid an old fisherman, who stood near a stall in Fleet Street, a small sum to marry her, in order to escape from her creditors; and as the man was old and half-imbecile, it would have been sheer waste of time for anyone to try to get any money out of him for his wife's debts! Charlotte, having gained her object, left him at once and never saw him again.

No wonder that Colley Cibber quarrelled with this daughter, who brought him only disgrace. It is believed that their first disagreement arose from her voluntarily taking the character of Fobling Fibble in the *Battle of the Poets*, which was said to be a satire on the great actor. But though this particular breach was patched up, the life and habits of Charlotte so incensed her father that, in spite of her being at times almost destitute, he entirely disowned her.

We get a pitiful glimpse of this unfortunate woman during the last years of her life, from Mr. Samuel Whyte. Charlotte was then living in a miserable thatched hovel surrounded by cinder and other rubbish heaps; her companions being a slovenly drudge, a monkey, dog, cat and magpie. In these sordid surroundings, on a pair of bellows on her lap, she wrote a novel. With a view of purchasing this book, Mr. Whyte, in company with a bookseller, trudged through deep mud to this unsavoury dwelling; the door was opened by a tall, lean and tattered object, wearing a blue apron, with a "torpid voice and hungry smile." After some haggling the sum of ten pounds was at last agreed upon as the price of the manuscript,

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and handed over to Charlotte—one of life's typical vagabonds.

A minor celebrity in the neighbourhood of Bath, who doubtless was acquainted with the "diminutive Master of Ceremonies," was Mrs. Miller, who introduced at her fine villa at Batheaston the game of Bouts Rimés—said, according to Mr. Addison, to have come originally from France, where the French ladies set them as tasks to their lovers. Mrs. Miller, who had no pretensions to birth, was the daughter of a Mrs. Riggs, and was married to a Captain Miller (afterwards Sir John), described as being a well-intentioned but officious man.

After the villa at Batheaston had been completed, the Millers, for reasons of economy, migrated for a time to the continent. The circumstances both before and after this flitting are thus amusingly described by Horace Walpole: "They caught a little of what was then called taste, built and planted, and begot children, till the whole caravan was forced to go abroad and retrieve. Alas! Mrs. Miller is returned a beauty, a genius, a Sappho, a tenth Muse, as romantic as Mademoiselle Scuderi, and as sophisticated as Mrs. Vesey." In no way deterred by the fact that she could not speak a word correctly in either French or Italian, Mrs. Miller wrote three volumes of her travels. But it was her gatherings for Bouts Rimés and not her travels, which brought her into notoriety.

These poetic gatherings were held every Thursday. Mrs. Miller had brought back from Italy an old Roman vase, which we are told was decorated with pink ribbon and myrtle. This precious urn, representing the shrine of the deity, was placed in an apartment specially dedicated to Apollo. And as the invited company solemnly formed a procession, each "nymph" in turn dropped a votive offering into the urn, in the shape of a few verses. Six gentlemen now retired into an

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adjoining room to consider the merits of each poem, and the authors of the four best compositions, having been duly presented to Mrs. Miller, now knelt before that lady, who, in the capacity of high-priestess, crowned them with myrtle.

The writing of these rhymes required no little skill; a subject being chosen, the competitor was given a list of words rhyming with each other—the endings to every line—and was expected to make a poem from these, keeping the end words in the order they were given. Some of the subjects chosen for these *Bouts Rimés* were most ludicrous; the Duchess of Northumberland won great distinction from the one she composed on a buttered muffin!

Mrs. Miller is described as being a portly and rather coarse-looking dame, of a kindly enough disposition; her one weakness being that she posed as a lady of quality, for which both her birth and her appearance rendered her singularly unfitted. Yet even Fanny Burney, who was openly scornful of the lady, acknowledged that there was nothing more “tonish” than to attend her parties. And though everyone laughed at her absurdities, we are told that as many as fifty carriages might be seen outside the gates of the villa at Batheaston, and as many Duchesses within its doors. There was one point on which Mrs. Miller was uncompromising—none who had the smallest blemish on their reputation need expect an invitation. Among those who attended these gatherings were Lord Palmerston, George Pitt, Miss Seward, and Garrick, who wrote some lines on the chosen subject of “Charity,” which obviously suggested sarcasm:

“For heaven’s sake bestow on me  
A little wit, for that would be,  
Indeed, an act of charity.”

The hostess herself took part in these competitions;

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Walpole said that the only fault he had to find with her verses was their lack of meter; the following is one of these Bouts Rimés :

“ Ever brilliant, ever charming, I defy the power of time  
To deprive me of adorers, tho’ oft I’m purchased by a rhyme;  
To possess my glowing beauties, poets would resign their  
bays;  
Court and Senate, still contending, sing my praise in various  
lays;  
Midnight hall, nor opera, glitt’ring without me afford no  
pleasure;  
Yet joyless pass his anxious moments, who to me devotes his  
leisure.”

A very superior set of verses were written by George Pitt :

“ Take of jest and of humour, an ounce at a time,  
Mix the flowers of fancy, and tincture of rhyme;  
To some smart repartees, add the essence of bays,  
With the sugar of sense, just to sweeten your lays;  
Then quick lively ideas throw in at your pleasure,  
Of the spirit of wine add some drops at your leisure.”

This “ Parnassus Fair ” was, after several years, brought to a sudden conclusion, for some evilly disposed person deposited in this sacred urn such licentious and satirical verses, that neither the hostess nor her guests dared risk a repetition of such an enormity. Good-natured satire is always permissible; a typical one of these, on the Batheaston meetings, is the following :

Addressed to Lady Miller on the urn at Batheaston.

“ Miller, the Urn in ancient time, ’tis said,  
Held the collected ashes of the dead :  
So thine, the wonder of these modern days,  
Stands open night and day for lifeless lays.  
Leave not unfinished, then, the well-formed plan,  
Complete the work thy classic taste began;  
And oh, in future, ’ere thou dost unurn them,  
Remember first to raise a pile, and burn them.”



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Thomas Holcroft, the dramatist and novelist, once thought of competing for the Bouts Rimés prize at Batheaston. "Not so much," he observes, "from a supposition that I should gain the laurel, as because I think the plan deserves encouragement," which observation would hardly have been pleasing to the vanity of Mrs. Miller! Holcroft was the son of a shoemaker in Orange Court, Leicesterfields; his principal clients seem to have been chairmen, who, on account of being obliged to walk more warily than other folk, had their feet shod differently from the rest of the world. Besides his shoemaking, Holcroft let out horses for hire; but business visibly declined, so when Thomas was six years old, Mr. Holcroft moved his family into the country; and it was here that he taught his little son to read.

Money grew scarcer every day, and the Holcrofts were at last compelled to tramp the country as pedlars. Upon one occasion Thomas was sent to beg at various houses and, having no lack of imagination, he had a highly successful day; after recounting his adventures to his parents his father was so greatly impressed that he exclaimed: "God bless the boy! I never heard the like!" But presently his face changed and, looking earnestly at his wife, he added: "This must not be; the poor child will become a commonplace vagabond, go on the highway when he is older and get hanged. He shall never go on such errands again."

But although this particular danger of ending his days on the gallows was nipped in the bud, Thomas led a wretched life of hardship and starvation: his father having a quantity of apples and pears for sale he purchased two or three asses, and the task of driving them fell to the boy. We get a painful picture of Thomas, when only nine years old, returning from some coal-pits, driving one of the asses which was laden with coals over roads full of deep ruts. If the unfortunate animal stuck fast, and there happened to be no one at



THOMAS HOLCROFT, BY J. OPIE, R.A.

*National Portrait Gallery, London.  
Emery Walker, Photographer.*



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hand, the child ran from one coal-pit to another, begging help from the miners, who, as often as not, answered his entreaties by curses.

Nor did his father's uncontrollable temper make life easier for the boy. Although deeply attached to his son, Mr. Holcroft believed in drastic measures, and he would, for the most trivial fault, punish him with great cruelty. All this time Thomas had never forgotten his reading lessons; and the ballad of Chevy Chase falling by some chance into his hands, he learnt it by heart, for which feat his father presented him with a half-penny!—not a very princely sum, but probably all that Mr. Holcroft could afford.

A change for the better was, however, approaching, for when Thomas was thirteen he procured a place as stable-boy at Newmarket. No words can so graphically describe the contrast to his former life, as his own: "Happy," he says, "had been the meal where I had enough; rich to me the rag that kept me warm; and heavenly the pillow no matter what, or how hard, on which I could lay my head to sleep. Now I am warmly clothed, nay gorgeously. . . . I feed voluptuously, not a prince on earth, perhaps, with half the appetite, and never-failing relish; and, instead of being obliged to drag through the dirt after the most sluggish, obstinate and despised among our animals, I was mounted on the noblest that the earth contains."

Yet life at racing stables must have been rough enough, with a herd of mischievous, even brutal boys as companions, apart from the risk of being badly damaged by untrained or vicious horses. As for books, they were of course practically an unknown quantity, even had there been the time to read them. But, through the good-nature of a literary "cock-feeder," Holcroft was lent *Gulliver's Travels*, as well as the *Spectator*, and a few other books; while out of his wages of four pounds a year, he spent five shillings

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a quarter in learning singing, and another five shillings a quarter on arithmetic lessons; when, for want of more convenient materials, he added up his sums on the paling of the stable-yard by means of an old nail.

But fresh complications arose at the racing stables; and, having been tempted to try his luck at betting, and obliged to account to his father for his losses—which were trifling enough but more than Mr. Holcroft could afford to pay—Thomas determined to leave Newmarket and rejoin his father, who had set up a cobbler's stall in London. Four years later, in no way deterred by poverty, young Holcroft took unto himself a wife: among other ways of earning a living he set up a day-school in the country, where he lived three months upon potatoes and buttermilk, for, alas! only one scholar came to be instructed.

After this dismal failure, Holcroft became an inmate in the family of Mr. Granville Sharp—the slavery abolitionist and miscellaneous writer—partly in the capacity of a servant and partly in that of a secretary. Now, Holcroft had been in the habit of spending his spare hours at a reading, or “Sporting Club,” at which scenes of plays, etc., were rehearsed, and after he had entered the house of Mr. Granville Sharp, he saw no reason why these visits to the club should cease. Unfortunately that gentleman, believing it to be a waste of time, took a different view of the matter, and, having openly expressed his sentiments on the subject, which were wholly ignored, Holcroft once again found himself adrift in the world.

It was not a promising situation, and as a last forlorn chance he was about to enlist in the East India Company's Service as a common soldier, when he stumbled across an old acquaintance of the “Sporting Club,” who offered him an introduction to Macklin. This resulted in his being engaged as prompter at the



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Dublin theatre, with the understanding that should any small part fall vacant he would take it.

For the next seven years, Holcroft travelled about from one strolling company to another; at a time when his financial affairs were rather more desperate than usual, he wrote a farce called *The Critic*, which, though successful, seems to have been only a "one night" play. A succession of other pieces quickly followed, about thirty in all, until Holcroft wrote his famous *Road to Ruin*, which finally established his reputation as a playwright. Soon after this he wrote his novel *St. Ives*, which appeared in the formidable form of seven volumes.

Holcroft was evidently a believer in the natural goodness of Man, for in this novel he expressed his political ideas of justice and progress, and how the world had but to be shown the noblest path and it would not fail in following it. But he was associated with others who had considerably less belief in human nature, and considerably more belief in the salutary effect of violence; and four years later, on the outbreak of the French Revolution, he found himself accused of high treason. In a state of almost incredulous astonishment that such doctrines as his could be so misinterpreted, he surrendered himself and was committed to Newgate. But as Horne Tooke and several of his companions, who had got themselves into similar trouble for their political opinions, were acquitted, Holcroft was never brought to trial.

Of a naturally economical turn of mind, Holcroft had one pet extravagance; a love of buying books and pictures. This expensive taste, however, so crippled him in the last years of his life that he was compelled to part with his pictures, and Lamb speaks sympathetically of how Holcroft had been obliged to sell his long-necked Guido.

But the greatest tragedy in the dramatist's life was

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the death of his son. William had always been a wild and restless lad, and one day when he was sixteen he crept upstairs, stole forty pounds and a pair of pistols from his father's room, and hastened to join a companion who was starting for the West Indies. His father, accompanied by his greatest friend, William Godwin, tracked the runaway to Deal, where William was hiding in the steerage of the vessel. Young Holcroft had vowed that he would shoot anyone who tried to capture him, unless it happened to be his father, in which case he would shoot himself; and recognizing his father's footstep, he pulled the trigger and shot himself dead. For a year after this tragedy Holcroft hardly left the house, and the memory of it never effaced itself from his mind.

The dramatist was very susceptible; for, apart from "a mind to" Amelia Alderson, and a passion for Mrs. Inchbald, he had a succession of four wives, of whom we hear little, beyond the fact that they lived in a chronic condition of indigence.

## CHAPTER X

Joseph Nollekens—John Elwes—Professor Porson.

MANY men of no education have developed genius, but few geniuses have remained as illiterate to the day of their death as Joseph Nollekens, the remarkable sculptor. Nollekens, who descended from a race of artists, first learnt drawing at Shipley's school; but at the age of twelve he was placed under the care and instruction of the famous sculptor, Peter Scheemakers. Although looked upon by the neighbours as rather a witless lad, Mrs. Scheemakers found Joseph useful in the house, and declared: "Joey was so honest that she could always entrust him to stone the raisins."

At a later date, when Nollekens had learnt to be penurious, this might have been a rash statement to make; for at the dinners given by the Royal Academy Club, to which he belonged, we are told that he made a point of pocketing a few nutmegs when no one was looking.

As a boy, "Joey" took great interest in funerals, and one of his greatest delights was to toll the church-bell, an art in which he excelled. The sexton and his men ranked among his most intimate friends, and he was constantly running down to St. James's Church, Piccadilly, to inquire how the funerals were progressing; indeed whenever "Joey" was missing, one might feel certain that he was officiating at one of these mournful ceremonies.

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At the end of ten years, Nollekens took leave of his kind master, Scheemakers, and set out for Rome. Here he worked hard at modelling, and it would seem with no small profit. We hear from Mr. John Thomas Smith, keeper of the prints and drawings in the British Museum, how the great sculptor watched the labourers at Portia Latina digging gravel at the bottom of a well, among which were many ancient terra-cottas. These he purchased for a trifle, and on his return to England sold to the well-known Mr. C. Townley, who was one of his clients. Later these terra-cottas, as well as the celebrated Elgin Marbles, were let into the wall of the first room of the Gallery of Antiquities at the British Museum.

“Nolly,” as his friends called him, was always childish; his lack of manners was so bad, that when he stayed in country houses for the purpose of erecting any monument, a table in another room was usually reserved for him. Yet in other ways he was uncommonly shrewd. It is amusing to hear how he outwitted the custom-house officials by packing lace, silk, gloves, etc., into plaster busts which were hollow, covering up the back with a coating of plaster. But he was less successful in his attempts to pass a large picture through the customs-house by cutting it into several pieces, for the officials scented the deception and made him pay duty on each piece, as though it was a separate picture.

On his return to England, Nollekens took a house and studio in Mortimer Street, and we presently hear of his becoming enamoured of a Miss Welch. A prim unlovable woman she must have been from all accounts, with even stronger instincts of parsimony than her lover; for to do Nollekens justice, upon several occasions he acted with great generosity. But there was no denying that Miss Welch had a considerable share of good looks; and in spite of her assertions

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that she was above "the fleeting whimsies of depraved elegance," she must have made a striking contrast to her insignificant, ill-shaped little husband, who even with his hat on only came up to her shoulder.

The *ménage* in Mortimer Street was, as may be supposed, conducted on strictly economical lines. The factotum was a woman of some individuality who, from the red-brown colour of her skin, was known by the name of "Bronze." Like most confidential servants, "Bronze" was often the silent but far from unobservant witness to the wranglings between her master and mistress; though like inconsequent children, in a short time they generally, metaphorically speaking, kissed and made friends.

Upon one occasion company was expected to dinner; and "Bronze," who was afflicted with a sore throat, croaked out from numberless wrappings of flannel, that "all the Hawkinses" were in the dining-parlour. This was no trifling matter to a housewife who had calculated to a nicety the exact amount of food each guest would demolish; so Mrs. Nollekens cried out to her husband: "Nolly, it is truly vexatious that we are always served so when we dress a joint; you won't be so silly as to ask them to dinner?" "Nolly" declared emphatically that nothing was further from his thoughts, and eventually we hear that the "Hawkinses," who had probably heard more of the conversation than was intended, let themselves out silently without ringing the bell.

Besides "Bronze," Mrs. Nollekens had a special servant of her own, a rather good-looking woman called Mary Fairy. Mary Fairy ruled the house, including her master, with a rod of iron, and showed scant civility to his friends. After the death of her mistress, Mary Fairy manœuvred to entrap the sculptor into matrimony, but her intentions being discovered



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she was promptly and unceremoniously ejected from the house.

Mrs. Nollekens was extremely jealous of her husband's models; May Day was especially a day of heartburnings, as Nollekens found the milkmaids' dance, composed of girls who might be fair, but were certainly frail, very alluring. Upon these occasions the way he distributed half-crowns among the milkmaids almost bordered on extravagance; while his wife, in great ill-humour, used every inducement to entice him from the window, from which he obtained the best view of the dancers.

Among his many illustrious sitters was George III, who appears to have been much amused by the whimsies of the little man; Nollekens was in no way awed by the fact of modelling a bust of His Majesty. We hear, too, of many fashionable ladies who received home truths in the most unflinching manner. To one lady, who had a terrible squint, he suggested that she "should look the other way for then he could get rid of the shyness in the cast of her eye." In Nollekens' bust of Dr. Johnson, the doctor was exceedingly displeased because the sculptor had "loaded" the head with hair. Indeed the sittings usually resulted in a certain amount of peevishness on both sides. Nollekens declared fretfully one day: "Doctor, you *did* say you would give my busts half an hour before dinner, and the dinner has been waiting this long time." To which observation the doctor barked: "Bow, wow, wow."

To please his sitters, Nollekens often resorted to a little artifice, pretending by means of stone-dust, which he dropped wherever he struck his chisel, to cut a little off a nose, chin, etc., which may have been considered by the owner too long to be classic. When the sitters imagined enough had been removed, there would be an exclamation to the effect that he must not cut off

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too much, followed by a burst of enthusiasm as to how vastly the bust was improved . . . the sculptor must surely see that for himself.

Nollekens obtained very high prices for his work; the statue and pedestal of Pitt, including numerous marble busts and casts of the great statesman, brought him no less than fifteen thousand pounds. But he had little comfort out of his large income, and in his old age he was surrounded by a herd of sycophants, who presented him with paltry gifts, hoping thereby to be remembered after his death. In his will, disposing of two hundred thousand pounds, were many legacies, and no fewer than fourteen codicils were added.

The notable miser John Elwes was, like Nollekens, nearly entrapped into marriage by a specimen of the Mary Fairy type, with whom from principles of economy he usually sat in the kitchen, but as in the case of Nollekens, vigilant friends averted the catastrophe.

Elwes evidently inherited his extreme parsimony from his mother, who was worth a hundred thousand pounds and is said to have starved herself to death. In his early life Elwes showed few signs of this trait; but though he mixed in fashionable society, dressed like every other young man of his time, and gambled for high stakes, he would on his way home from these gambling orgies at four o'clock in the morning, pass through Smithfield to meet his cattle, and haggle with the butcher over a shilling.

Now Elwes was heir to his uncle, Sir Harvey Elwes, who lived at Stoke in Suffolk, and had a perfect lust for gold. To thwart Sir Harvey's passion would have been undiplomatic to say the least; so when young Elwes paid his periodic visits to Stoke he put up at the inn, and changed into garments suggestive of a tramp rather than a gentleman. This disreputable apparel secured him, however, a good reception from

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Sir Harvey; and uncle and nephew would sit amicably over a fire which was kept alight by one stick, sharing at long intervals a glass of wine, and talking of the unpardonable extravagance of the times; while to avoid the unnecessary expense of a candle, they retired to bed as soon as it grew dark.

Not only, however, had young Elwes to manœuvre about his raiment, but to come to an understanding with his appetite, which happened to be an uncommonly large one. This he accomplished by inviting himself to dine surreptitiously with some neighbour; returning at a later hour to his uncle with so little craving for food, that Sir Harvey was perfectly enchanted with his heir.

It was not until Elwes was over forty that he came into his kingdom. He was at that time occupying a house at Marcham in Berkshire, where he lived with his housekeeper—probably a wife would have entailed too much expense—and his two illegitimate sons. From all accounts Marcham must have lacked the very rudiments of comfort; for Colonel Timms, the nephew of Mr. Elwes, tells us how, when on a visit to his uncle, he woke up in the night to find himself drenched to the skin, and discovered that the rain was pouring in from the ceiling. After trundling his bed half over the room he at last succeeded in finding a dry corner. Next morning, when relating his adventures at breakfast, his uncle merely observed: "Ah! did you find it out? Ah! that's a *nice corner*, isn't it?"

After the death of Sir Harvey, Mr. Elwes went to live at Stoke in Norfolk, where he kept a pack of fox-hounds, and was said to own the best hunters in the country. But this wild extravagance did not entail the lavish expenditure it suggests, for his huntsman seems to have been a treasure such as rarely falls to the lot of mortals. Every morning this invaluable person rose at four o'clock, milked the cows, prepared breakfast

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for his master; after which he hastily donned his green coat, saddled the horses, let out the hounds and was off to the chase. Moreover, his labours were just as unceasing on his return, for he prepared his master's supper, attended to the horses, etc., etc.

Mr. Elwes had long ago shown his contempt for fashion, and his dress had become more than a trifle grotesque. His boots were never allowed to be cleaned in case they wore out; and he once rescued a discarded wig from a rut in a lane, and wore it for more than a fortnight. At this particular time his clothes must have been even more disintegrated than usual; for his coat was so badly torn that he mournfully extracted from an old oak chest, belonging to his great grandfather, Sir Jervois Elwes, a full dress green velvet coat with slash sleeves. And sitting in solemn state at dinner that night, might have been seen the quaint figure of Mr. Elwes, arrayed in this green velvet coat, his white hair falling round his face, on the top of which was perched the lately repudiated black wig.

Mr. Elwes owned a number of houses, indeed a large part of Marylebone, Portland Place, and Portman Square was built by him. When living in London he generally installed himself in one of his many untenanted houses, staying perhaps only a night at one and a night at another, for when any likely tenant appeared the miser gladly shifted his quarters. This was no difficult matter, for we hear that his furniture usually consisted of a couple of beds, a couple of chairs, and an old woman! But these constant flittings necessitated rude health, and once Colonel Timms, wishing particularly to see his uncle about some difficulty, traced him to one of these uninhabited houses; there he found Mr. Elwes in a half conscious condition; while further search revealed the body of the old woman, lying on a rug in a garret; she had apparently been dead about two days. It is little wonder that



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the poor soul succumbed at last to such a vagrant life, when one night she might be sleeping in a small house in the Haymarket, and the next in a luxurious but draughty mansion in Portland Place; nor is it surprising that we hear she caught quite an amazing number of colds.

It is rarely that misers worry their heads over politics; but with the express understanding that it would involve him in no expense, Mr. Elwes was elected member for Berkshire three consecutive times. And to his credit must it be said, that during the time he was in Parliament, as well as when he acted in the capacity of magistrate, he held himself aloof from all bribery; and fulfilled his duties with absolute conscientiousness. Indeed, although his life was a succession of avaricious actions, he never did a dishonourable one; and when it was not a question of money, there have been kind deeds, involving considerable trouble, recorded of the old miser.

A most punctual member of the House, Mr. Elwes never left until the debates were over, when he walked to the Mount Coffee-House. One evening, the night being very dark, he ran into the poles of a sedan chair and cut his leg rather severely. After much persuasion he was induced to send for an apothecary, who declared that it was providential he had been summoned, to which Mr. Elwes made this somewhat remarkable suggestion: "Very probable, but Mr. —, I have one thing to say to you. In my opinion my legs are not much hurt—now you think they are, so I will make this agreement: I will take one leg and you shall take the other; you shall do what you please with yours, I will do nothing to mine, and I will wager your bill that my leg gets well before yours." Elwes used afterwards to declare in great glee to his friends, that he got the better of the apothecary by a fortnight.

In his manners Mr. Elwes was gentle and courteous.



# ADELPHI THEATRE, STRAND.

On EASTER MONDAY, the 8th of APRIL, 1822,

**Monsieur ALEXANDRE;**

*The celebrated Dramatic Ventriloquist,*

Will deliver, for the First Time, an entirely New Comic, Characteristic, Vocalic, Mimetic, Multiformical, Manilquous, Ubiquitalical ENTERTAINMENT, in Three Parts, constructed expressly for this Occasion, and entitled **THE**

## Adventures of a Ventriloquist;

OR, THE ROGUERIES OF NICHOLAS

to which he will display the various astonishing Vocal Illusions, for which he has been so justly celebrated and distinguished on the Continent, and which have been represented with such signal Approbation, before most of the Crowned Heads and Princes of Europe.

PERSONÆ OF THE ENTERTAINMENT.

*VISIBLE PERSONS.*

**ALDERMAN PILLBURY**, an Invalid of his own making, dieting on the Pharmacopœia, and suffering under a complication of Patent Medicines, two Doctors, an Apothecary, and his Wife.  
**CAPTAIN FURLOUGH**, a young Officer of Infantry, on the Home Service, shewing the height to which a Lover's Flame may carry him, by ascending his Mistress's Chimney.  
**NICHOLAS**, Servant to the Alderman, with an appetency to Accident, in breaking every thing he lays his hand on, but invariably mending matters through an ingenuity sharpened with Hunger, and assisted by Opportunity.  
**Mrs. PILLBURY**, Wife of the Alderman, a Lady strongly impressed with an Idea that Prevention is better than Cure, and with a most annoying fondness for her Spouse, admirably illustrating the secret of killing with kindness.  
**Miss FLIRTILLA PILLBURY**, Daughter of the Alderman, beloved by the Captain. As this young Lady is under Seventeen, her Character, it may be expected, is not yet settled, her Ideas, however, are strongly fixed on having a young Officer of Infantry for her Husband, and living in a Cottage near some Nursery Grounds, with a Nanny and the Serpentine in perspective, in the event of disappointment.

*INVISIBLE PERSONS.*

**ANDREW STUMP**, Surgeon Dentist and Trepanner, getting his Bread by other People's Teeth, and holding tight what he does get; his Generosity being confined to giving—Advice. Not to be seen on account of a violent Pain in his Jaws, which defies his own Specifier, and confines him to his Room.  
**JACOB**, his Man, with a very broad back, as amiable as his Master, and hoping to be a great Drawer in time, practising meanwhile on the Corks, kept in the dark by Nicholas, but still getting something for his pains. Not to be seen on account of being in the Cellar all the time.  
**PILLBURY MINIMUS**, an Infant in Arms, with a fine Voice for Tragedy. Not to be seen from the intervention of a Cradle, and breaking through the desirable consummation of Children being seen and not heard.

*ASSUMED PERSONS.*

**ACQUIRE TIVY**, possessing all the good Qualities of a Country Fox-hunter, viz. a Love of Sport and good Lungs.  
**QUICK TONGS**, a young Beginner, taking the place of his Master to try his hand at a pull.—Drawing all but the right, and only charging for one.

*IMITATED HALF-LENGTH PERSONS.*

**CELESTINE**, a young Novice, learning to sing, but waiting on Ear and a Voice.  
**SISTERS MUMBLE, DOLEFUL, JOLIE, SNUFFLE, LAMBERTE, and SURLY**, characteristically Toothless, Melancholy, Giddy, Sauffy, Fat, and Disfigured.

*QUADRUPEDS, &c.*

Growler, the Alderman's Dog.—Givetongue, another Dog, a Friend of his.—Felina, Mrs. Pillbury's Cat.—Gobble, a Turkey Cock.—a Pig and Sow with their Family.—a Cock and three Hens, Ducks, &c.

*INANIMATE OBJECTS, &c.*

An Omelet freing.—a Flint and Steel.—a Plane.—a Saw.—a Corkscrew.—a Stick.—and a Guitar.

SYNOPSIS OF THE ENTERTAINMENT

PART I

## FOOD AND PHYSIC.

*CUPID TURNED CHIMNEY SWEEP.*

Necessity shews to be the Mother of Invention, and Mrs. Glasco (without any reflection) outdone by a visible Recipe for preparing a Dish that in point of cheapness and facility, is superior to anything in the "whole Art of Cookery."  
That Board Wages are a bare Cupboard.  
That Beet Root is a better specific for a sudden Homœopathy than caudied Horehound.  
That a Workman may be something without his Tools.

PART II

## WINE AND THE TOOTH ACHES,

OR, THE BITER BIT

to which Monsr. A will perform one of the Acts of the Bottle Conjuror, by Drinking and Singing at the same time. He will also hold a Conversation in a Cellar, and yet not be—low.  
That a Man may be a Dentist, and no Tooth Drawer.  
That there is Virtue in having a Cold.  
That a Trap Door may be made an Interpreter, and convey one word for another.

PART III

## CURTAIN LECTURES.

*JACK IN THE BOX.*

Containing a Keyhole Illustration of Domestic Felicity, and a small Peep behind the Grate, or the Sisterhood unrolled, together with a new method of playing at Bumble Puppy.

There may be Sporting without Hunting.  
That we may get the Horns without catching the Stag.  
That a Man may signify his Will against his Will, and  
That five Persons may be here, there, everywhere, and nowhere, at the same Time.

Monsieur ALEXANDRE, assisted by VOX, ET PRÆTEREA NIHIL.

Between each Part a select Band, led by Mr. PARNELL, will perform the most celebrated Symphonies of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, &c. arranged as Quartetts, expressly for this Occasion.

BOX, PIT, & GALLERY, 12 Doors open at 7, and commence at 8. No Money returned. [W. GLINDON, Painter, Rupert Street.]

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An amusing instance is told of his politeness, although it suggests more than a dash of sarcasm: One day when he was out shooting, one of the company who was both an indifferent and a careless shot, lodged the pellets in the cheek of the miser—who was then an old man—causing him considerable pain; when, however, the gentleman approached to make his apologies, Mr. Elwes forestalled him, by holding out his hand and saying: “ My dear sir, I congratulate you on your improvement, I thought you would hit something in time.”

In spite of his self-enforced privations, Mr. Elwes lived to be over eighty. His last days were spent in the house of his son George, any difficulty in the way of travelling expenses being satisfactorily overcome by a friend offering to convey him gratis to his destination! But his deplorable mania grew more and more painful, and the old man might be heard in his room at night as though struggling with someone, and crying out pitifully: “ I will keep my money, I will; nobody shall rob me of my property.” Shortly before his death he insisted on going to bed every night fully dressed—fearing perhaps to be taken unawares by some robber—and was discovered thus early one morning fast asleep, with a torn hat on his head and a stick in his hand. Six weeks later his sons were the richer by a quarter of a million—Mr. Elwes was dead.

If Elwes yearned after gold, Professor Porson, the celebrated Greek scholar, and editor of *Euripides*, showed more than a passing yearning after alcohol. A rather disreputable resort in old London was the “ Cider Cellars ” in Maiden Lane, close to the Adelphi Theatre. Here, after the theatres were closed, congregated many of the young bloods and literary characters of the day, and among others was frequently to be seen the learned Professor.

One would have thought that Porson inherited no special culture, his father being a weaver and his mother



RICHARD PORSON, BY J. D. GIANNELLI.

*National Portrait Gallery, London.  
Emery Walker, Photographer.*



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the daughter of a shoemaker. Yet they must have had more than an ordinary share of natural ability, for the weaver had, through the means of an old arithmetic book, mastered the higher branches of that study; while his wife could not only repeat many of the most beautiful passages of Shakespeare, but was able to appreciate them.

It is not therefore surprising that young Richard showed early signs of talents which afterwards made him remarkable; much interest was taken in him by the influential people in the neighbourhood, who not only paid his expenses at Eton but afterwards at Cambridge, where four years later Porson was elected to a fellowship. But, owing to his religious scruples, he decided not to enter the Church, which, under the circumstances, was perhaps merciful—instead he presently migrated to London, where he was at first so hard pressed for money that we hear of his living for six weeks on a guinea. Again, however, his friends came to the rescue and bought him an annuity of £100.

Unfortunately, as has been already said, Porson had a rival to his learning and books, in his partiality for liquid refreshment. Horne Tooke goes so far as to say that Porson would sooner drink ink if nothing more appetizing was available. And, if rumour can be believed, Hoppner, the artist, on telling his wife that the great scholar had scented out a bottle of spirits which she had carefully kept in her room, the lady exclaimed: "My God! it was spirits for the lamp." It was no uncommon thing for the Professor when dining out to return to the dining-room after the guests had left it, for the purpose of collecting what was left at the bottom of the wine-glasses, which he drank off with great gusto. But though it was a matter of indifference to his friends if he stole downstairs and drained their glasses, it greatly annoyed them to be kept up night after night as companions at his carousals.



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One evening Horne Tooke asked him to dine, having taken the precaution of finding out that he had been up for the last three nights, and thinking that on this night, at least, his guest would depart at a reasonable hour; but he was mistaken, and when morning came the weary Tooke in despair said that he had promised to meet a friend at a coffee-house in Leicester Square, to which Porson calmly replied that he would accompany him. On arriving at the coffee-house, Tooke, however, contrived to slip out, and when he reached home he ordered his servant under no circumstances to admit Mr. Porson, not even if he battered down the door, for, as he remarked: "a man who could sit up four nights successively, could sit up forty."

Unlike most men of culture, Porson showed no reverence for books as the outer coverings for treasures of high price, and was ruthless in his treatment of them, whether they belonged to himself or to anyone else; he went so far as to boast that he had more *bad* copies of *good* books than any other gentleman in England.

One of the remarkable things about this Greek scholar was his memory. He could without the smallest difficulty repeat page after page from almost any author. And, once, when his guests jokingly suggested that he should repeat backwards a certain page he had been reading, he did so, making only two trifling mistakes. Yet he declared that this amazing memory was a curse rather than a blessing, as it reminded him of things he would sooner have forgotten.

It does not surprise one that Porson cared not a straw for his personal appearance, except on the rare occasions when he donned his "gala" costume. We hear of him at Bath with "lank, uncombed hair, loose neck-cloth and wrinkled stockings." Sometimes, indeed, when he went to call on his friends, his appearance was so dirty and disreputable that their servants refused his admittance. Under these circumstances it seems strange

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that Porson found a bride, but he did. And while he was smoking a pipe at the Cider Cellars with his friend, George Gordon, he announced his nuptials in the following way: "Friend George, do you think that widow Lunan is an agreeable sort of personage as times go?" Gordon assenting that such might be the case, Porson promptly invited him to the church the following morning at eight o'clock, where the ceremony was duly performed, after which the married pair went their own ways with their respective friends.

The widow Lunan, sister to Porson's friend, Mr. Perry, for whom she kept house, was a sorely tried lady, for, Porson having insisted on keeping the marriage a secret from her brother, no arrangements had been made for taking his wife home. But on the wedding day, "Friend George" used such forcible language to the bridegroom that he at last consented to let Mr. Perry into the secret; instead, however, of waiting to partake of the wedding feast, he hastened to his favourite haunt, the Cider Cellars, where he sat until eight o'clock next morning. In spite, however, of this unpropitious commencement of their married life, he made a kind enough husband during the year and a half that she lived.

If there was one thing more than another that Porson detested it was being "lionized." Two strangers who once called upon him must have been extremely embarrassed at their reception, for, ringing his bell, he ordered a pair of candles; and, after they had been placed on the table and lighted, he addressed his visitors in these laconic words: "Now then, gentlemen, you will be able to see me better."

In 1806 Porson was appointed Librarian of the London Institute, with a suite of rooms and £200 a year. The director, however, found his irregular habits incompatible with that dignified position, and determined to dismiss him, but before this was brought about

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Porson was struck down in the street by an apoplectic fit; and a few hours later the great scholar had forestalled the director. His books were sold for £2,000, and those with manuscript notes were bought by Trinity College.

## CHAPTER XI

Dr. Monsey—Henry Fuseli—Richard Tickell—Dr. Blair—Joseph Richardson.

AMONG the tribe of physicians who flourished—or starved—in the eighteenth century was the eccentric Dr. Monsey. Soon after Monsey started his medical career he had the good fortune to be called in to attend Lord Godolphin, who, recognizing in him a young man of talent, procured him the post of physician to Chelsea Hospital.

There were many unpleasing methods in those days for treating the ills to which human beings are prone, and we hear of Monsey extracting teeth by fastening a strong piece of catgut round the tooth, to the other end of which was tied a bullet. This bullet, as well as some powder, were then placed in a pistol, and on the trigger being pulled the offending tooth made a hasty exit. For this ingenious method, there was on the part of Monsey's patients a lack of enthusiasm, and the doctor had, usually, to be satisfied by up-rooting his own teeth after this drastic fashion.

A keen sense of humour had this Chelsea physician, which has, indeed, been compared to that of Dean Swift, but his manners left much to be desired; yet few took offence, and Horace Walpole declared that Monsey was the only man who ever contradicted him.

The physician's first meeting with Garrick is worth relating: Garrick was one day in court at the Old Bailey, and heard a gentleman asking another, who was stand-

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ing in front of him, whether he would move his head slightly so that he might have a better view of the Bench. No attention being paid to the request, the gentleman exclaimed: "If I was not such a coward I would give you a blow even in the Court." This speech of Monsey's appealed to Garrick, as he thought it indicated a strong personality, and on learning that the speaker was Dr. Monsey, he obtained an introduction to him.

Mrs. Garrick appreciated the doctor's blunt sincerity as much as her husband, once only excepted, when it became too personal to be altogether pleasant. The doctor had been paying the Garricks a visit at Hampton, and he and Mrs. Garrick were following Garrick in a coach to London, the latter having started earlier in the day. During the drive Monsey thought fit to correct a word that Mrs. Garrick, who was a Viennese, had mispronounced; this greatly offended the good lady, who declared that her pronunciation was so good that no one had ever taken her to be a foreigner.

At this speech the doctor laughed heartily, which in no way soothed her ruffled feelings, and the argument became so heated on both sides, that the doctor declared he would no longer remain in the carriage with such a silly and unreasonable woman. On reflecting, however, that if he got out he would be obliged to walk to town, he wisely thought better of his words and the drive was finished in sullen silence.

At dinner that evening Garrick inquired the reason of their gloom; but instead of taking the part of his spouse he reminded her of how, when buying some goods at an auction, and wishing for some reason to give the name of "Betty Price," she pronounced it "Petty Brice," causing so much confusion that her maid had been obliged to come to the rescue. It seems a little hard on the poor lady to relate this second mispronunciation, but Monsey having gained the best of the situation



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now paid her some rough compliment, and the evening ended amicably.

Another time we hear of Monsey upbraiding the Garricks for not asking him to meet the Duke of Argyll at dinner, upon which the actor told him that it was because he was "too great a blackguard." Eventually Garrick relented, and promised that if Monsey could behave with decent manners he should join the dinner party. Unfortunately Mrs. Garrick was so busy in looking after her more important guests, that Monsey's plate travelled several ineffectual journeys before it was replenished. This was more than the doctor could stand, and he became so exasperated that he called his hostess by a name which under no circumstances is permitted in polite society. Considerable embarrassment followed; but Monsey, in no way non-plussed, told a witty story and equanimity was again restored.

Unhappily the close friendship which existed between these two remarkable men came to an abrupt end owing to one of Monsey's unfortunate speeches, which was repeated, no doubt with embellishments, to the actor. Monsey was declared to have said that the reason Garrick did not retire from the stage after being grossly insulted in the theatre, was because he knew "that a guinea has a cross on one side and pile on the other."

There were many reversions promised for the post at Chelsea Hospital. One day the doctor, when looking out of the window, saw the gentleman who had been last promised the reversion closely examining the college and gardens. Upon which Monsey descended the stairs, and observed to the intruder that both the college and gardens were extremely agreeable; at the same time warning him that he was the fifth competitor, and that he had buried the other four. Moreover, he told the unfortunate gentleman that he felt in his bones that he

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should bury him also. Strangely enough the prophecy came to pass.

Among his many fads, the doctor held funeral ceremonies in great contempt, which was strengthened by his keen desire to advance the cause of Science by dissection: "What can it signify," said he, "whether my carcase is cut up by the knife of a surgeon, or the tooth of a worm?" Yet he was sufficiently human to acknowledge that, though he would be glad to die, like "all fools and all wits," he feared actual death. And however anxious to advance Science, Monsey had no intention of being dissected if he was still among the "undead dead," for he took elaborate precautions that the box which was to convey him to the surgeon—made with poles like a sedan-chair—should have an abundance of air-holes, in case he was only in a trance.

There were some curious items in the will of the doctor, who lived to the great age of ninety-five. To one young lady he left, with many praises of her wit and superior attractions, an old battered and worthless snuff-box; while he tells another young lady who had basked in his favour, that he had intended leaving her a large legacy, but on account of finding her "a pert, conceited minx" he had changed his mind.

Plain-spoken as was Dr. Monsey, he had a close rival in Henry Fuseli, the painter, who on being asked by Northcote, a brother painter, what he thought of his well-known picture, "Balaam and the Ass," replied: "My friend, you are an angel at an ass, but an ass at an angel."

Fuseli was born at Zurich, where he remained for some twenty-four years. Strangely enough, when a boy, the painter was so clumsy with his fingers that he was forbidden to touch anything which was likely to be broken, and visitors were always cautioned to: "Take care of that boy, for he destroys or spoils whatever he touches." His father, fearing that his son would never

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be able to earn his living as a painter, determined to extinguish his youthful aspirations in that direction, and put him into the Church. But what the boy was forbidden to do openly he did by stealth, appropriating candles from the kitchen that he might work at his drawings after his parents were in bed. We hear, too, of these sketches being sold to his schoolfellows, whereby he was enabled to become the proud possessor of a flaring red coat, in which he paraded the streets of Zurich, until laughed out of his folly.

Although Fuseli's father destined his son for the Church, he does not seem to have been an ardent church-goer himself. To make up for this remissness on his part he ordered a pile of theological books, and in the evenings he read aloud to young Henry the paraphrases of Doddridge or the sermons of Saurin.

But the boy paid little heed to these learned theologians, and whenever his father was looking the other way he secretly drew sketches, often using his left hand to avoid detection. In his other studies, however, Fuseli made such good progress, more especially in acquiring languages that, to use his own words, he was in the enviable position of being able to "let his folly or his fury get out through nine different avenues!"

At that time the pulpit oratory of Zurich consisted chiefly of ponderous discourses, and Fuseli's bold and unconventional ideas somewhat scandalized the worthy people of that town. The fame, however, of his talents had been so noised abroad, that a large audience assembled to hear his probationary sermon; with subtle humour Fuseli had chosen as his text: "What will this babbler say?" and he forthwith expatiated upon the passion of curiosity.

An event now took place, altogether outside theology, which changed the whole of Fuseli's life. He had in company with his friend, the afterwards celebrated

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Lavater, exposed the frauds of a certain magistrate; but to show up a person who is also a "personage," is often to place oneself in an embarrassing position, and it was considered advisable that Fuseli should leave Zurich for a time. After travelling for a year or so in various countries, he arrived in London, where we catch a glimpse of him soon after his arrival, asking a passer-by the way to the post office. And as the fellow laughed rudely at the stranger's strong German accent, Fuseli stamped his foot, while the tears rolled down his cheeks.

By means of translation and other literary work, Fuseli now supported himself, until he was offered the post of travelling companion to Lord Chewton. This post he soon afterwards relinquished; his independent spirit chafed at any form of servitude, and his patience was too limited to be able to cope successfully with a wilful pupil, to whom upon one occasion he administered a sound blow. When in later years he alluded to this time, he used jestingly to say: "The noble family of Waldegrave took me for a bear-leader, but they found me the bear."

It must be confessed that Fuseli's temper was uncommonly bad. Nor was he ignorant of the fact, for when pressed upon one occasion to give his age, a subject upon which he was extremely sensitive, he replied peevishly: "How can I know, I was born in February or March—it was some cursed cold month, as you may guess from my diminutive stature and crabbed disposition."

All this time, though Fuseli never laid aside his brush altogether, his passion needed some impetus to make it the overwhelming factor of his life. Some words of Sir Joshua Reynolds gave this needed impetus: "Young man," exclaimed the great painter, on being shown one of Fuseli's sketches, "were I the author of these drawings, and offered ten thousand a year not to

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practice as an artist, I would reject the proposal with contempt ! ”

Perhaps, too, Fuseli remembered the words his friend Lavater had written when he was leaving for England : “ Do but the seventh part of what thou canst,” for he now devoted himself entirely to his painting, and as soon as funds could be collected he started for Italy, where he remained for some years. On his return to England he was elected a Royal Academician, and was afterwards appointed Keeper of the Academy, and Professor of Painting.

Among Fuseli’s friends were Etty, Wilkie and Landseer—“ my little dog-boy,” as he playfully called him. As a master, Fuseli was often severe and satirical, and used sometimes to declare that there was more genius in the *claw* of Michael Angelo’s eagles, than in all the heads of those who thronged the Academy. The student who exclaimed in a voice of great self-complacency, as he held up his drawing to be criticized : “ Here, sir, I finished it without using a crumb of bread,” received the cutting reply : “ All the worse for your drawing, buy a twopenny loaf and rub it out.”

In spite of a strong vein of shyness, which made him shun strangers, Fuseli was a clever conversationalist, but he could not endure to be outshone by another. Once, when Mrs. Godwin invited him to meet Horne Tooke, Gratton, and other choice spirits, finding that they monopolized the conversation, Fuseli left the dining-room in high dudgeon, and rejoining Mrs. Godwin, exclaimed : “ I wonder you invited me to meet such wretched company.”

Commonplace talk the painter detested : one day when callers were twittering forth comments about the weather and such-like, to the astonishment of everyone he suddenly exclaimed : “ We had pork for dinner to-day.” Upon which a lady gushingly observed :



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“Dear Mr. Fuseli, what an odd remark.” “Why,” answered the unabashed painter, “it is as good as anything you have been saying for the last hour.”

In common with most of his countrymen, Fuseli was highly inflammable where the opposite sex were concerned. Among his infatuations was Angela Kauffman. Yet for Mary Wollstonecraft, whom he met two years after his marriage, his feelings seem never to have trespassed beyond the intellectual and platonic. Mary, on the contrary, conceived an ardent passion for the painter, and argued that though Mrs. Fuseli was his wife, she might claim to “unite herself to his mind.”

As to what exactly constitutes a union of minds, Mary seemed rather hazy, and was inclined to confound it sadly with physical charms. For she, who had been accustomed to wear a dress, such as we are told would be suitable for a “milk-woman,” including black worsted stockings and a beaver hat—her hair hanging over her shoulders—now adopted more fashionable raiment, reconstructed her manners, and engaged fashionable apartments. But all to no purpose: no flame of sentiment flickered in the chill heart of Fuseli; indeed her letters remained for days unopened in his pocket. At last, in desperation, Mary wrote a wild letter to the painter’s wife, in which she proposed becoming an inmate of the Fuseli *ménage*, as she “could not live without the satisfaction of seeing and conversing with him daily.”

At this astonishing proposal Mrs. Fuseli was not unnaturally aghast, and not only refused Mary’s request, but forbade her the house. We hear little more of her so far as Fuseli is concerned; after her snub from his wife she went abroad for two years, and on her return she received so frosty a welcome from the painter, that she wrote him a last letter of reproachful farewell; and they did not again meet until after her marriage with Godwin, and then only at intervals.

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There is something a little heartless in the curt way that Fuseli alludes to her death—as an after-thought in a postscript of a letter to Mr. Roscoe: “ Poor Mary ! ” The painter survived this uncontrolled, ill-balanced, but great-hearted woman by many years, for he was in his eighty-fourth year when he died.

Mr. Richard Tickell, the dramatist, displayed about as many vagaries as Sheridan; it was a common practice of his, when supping with some friend at a coffee-house, to make some trivial excuse for quitting the room for a few moments; then, as time passed and no Tickell appeared, there was no alternative left for the friend but to pay the bill for both! Even Taylor was nearly entrapped in this way; for meeting Tickell and his friend, Joseph Richardson, one evening, at the Piazza, Covent Garden, they insisted on his going with them to take a few oysters. But Taylor was aware of this little propensity of Tickell's, and as he had, moreover, only a few shillings in his pocket, he kept a watchful eye on him; and contrived to leave first, asking Richardson to pay his share for him.

As a raconteur, Tickell was in his element. Once, when paying a visit to the head of one of the colleges at Oxford, dinner was served in the common-room, and among those present was a very old and deaf member of the community. This gentleman asked one of his neighbours whether the Mr. Tickell, who was amusing everyone so much by his wit, was the well-known Mr. Tickell, the friend of Mr. Addison.

The company, expecting much entertainment from the fact of Tickell being taken for his own grandfather, declared that he was, and the old gentleman said how much he regretted that, owing to his deafness and the distance between their seats, it was impossible for him to enjoy the sparkling and original anecdotes about his late friend, the author of *Cato*. His neighbour, however, who was something of a wag, said that as far

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as was possible he would remedy this difficulty; Tickell then exerted himself to the utmost to keep up his grandfather's reputation, while the wag either repeated Tickell's *bon-mots* or invented others on his own account. And when the old gentleman finally left the party, it was with a feeling of pride that he had been in the company of Addison's friend, his one regret being that he could only hear the witty conversation second-hand.

Tickell's political pamphlet *Anticipation*, a forecast of the proceedings of the opening of Parliament, brought him considerable celebrity, and especially the way in which he imitated the manner and style of the various political speakers.

After the death of his wife, the sister of Mrs. Sheridan, Tickell was so overcome with grief that his only consolation was the planning of a tombstone, upon which was to be inscribed his determination never to marry again but remain wedded to the memory of her whom he had lost; Richardson, who had a shrewd knowledge of his friend's character, begged him, however, to postpone this tribute, arguing that if it was raised so soon the world would consider his grief as only a temporary effusion, but if delayed they would no longer doubt his constancy.

Tickell saw the wisdom of this advice, but the tombstone was never erected, for, a year or two later, he led a second wife to the altar. This lady, who was lacking neither in beauty nor in fortune, proved desperately extravagant, and poor Tickell's monetary affairs became hopelessly involved. Amongst others, he wrote to Warren Hastings begging for the loan of four hundred pounds, which from a grateful letter written shortly afterwards showed that his request had not been in vain. But the crisis was only delayed, for six months later poor Tickell jumped off the parapet at Hampton Court, though, through the

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influence of Sheridan, the tragedy was pronounced to be accidental.

Dr. Hugh Blair, the eminent Scotch divine, was as deficient in humour as Tickell was overflowing; his conversation, indeed, was often so childish that people found it difficult to credit him with common sense, far less ability. Of not one original remark does the doctor appear to have been the father, and he was apparently as much interested in his new wig, or his wife's new drawing-room paper, as in the latest literary or dramatic *chef d'œuvre*.

Yet to be professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres required no mean qualifications, and though there was a certain formality about the doctor's preaching, the particular form of eloquence of which he was master, had perhaps never before been heard in Scotland. His sermons were translated into many languages, and in England they ranked among the classics. Even Dr. Johnson praised them warmly, "though the dog," he wrote, "is a Scotchman and a Presbyterian and everything he should not be"; and Lord Mansfield having brought them to the notice of George the Third, that thrifty monarch granted Blair a pension of two hundred a year. One is inclined to wonder wherein lay the charm of these sermons which brought such universal admiration, if, as we have been told, the doctor was so totally lacking in originality.

Blair was an enthusiast over the Highland traditional poetry, and wrote in warm defence of Mr. James Macpherson, who claimed to have translated the poems of Ossian. Neither was the doctor lacking in a strong social instinct, and his house in Edinburgh was the resort of the distinguished Scotsmen of his time, Adam Smith, Lord Kames, David Hume, etc., while Robert Burns found in Blair a generous patron.

An amusing story is told of how, one day, a large company was invited by the doctor to meet an English



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cleric, who in the course of conversation was asked what was thought of Blair's sermons by his professional brothers in England. The answer was mortifying: "Why, they are not partial to them at all"; but the cleric must have been something of a diplomatist, for, on being further questioned, with no small embarrassment as to the cause of their unpopularity he replied: "Because they are so much read, and so generally known, that our clergymen can't borrow from them."

At that time men of letters used to foregather at the Poker Club, held in one of Edinburgh's dark closes: the *raison d'être* of this brilliant coterie, of which Blair was a member, was to discuss the question as to whether Scotland was to have its own militia on the same footing as England. The fraternity continued, however, long after its original object ceased to exist. During its palmy days the Club used to meet at "Tom Nicholson's, near the Cross"; very stringent were its rules; dinner being placed on the table at two o'clock, the price of which was one shilling a head; we hear, moreover, that the best claret and sherry could be procured, and that the reckoning for the dinner was "punctually called" at six o'clock. The only publication of note which survived the particular occasion for which it was written, was a satire by Dr. Adam Fergusson, entitled, *The History of the Proceedings in the Case of Margaret, commonly called Sister Peg*.

Although Blair never courted popularity, and was more ready to call attention to the talents of others than to his own, he had his pet vanities. The fit of his coat caused him so much anxiety, that when he visited his tailor he always insisted that the looking-glass should be spread on the floor, so that by standing on it on tip-toe he was able to see *how the skirts hung*. And once we hear that he begged an artist, who was painting his portrait, to draw his face with a *pleasing smile*. The painter replied that, in that case, he must



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put on an appropriate expression; the result being that the nearest approach to this that the doctor could muster resulted in such a "horrid grin," that a lady on pointing this out afterwards to the doctor, he ordered the picture to be destroyed, and replaced by a new one.

Apparently the doctor had the courage of his opinions, for we hear that he had a great penchant for novels, and that *The Arabian Nights* and *Don Quixote* were among his lighter reading. And though the prejudices of Scotland regarded card-playing among the clergy as an unprofitable pastime to be wholly discouraged, when Blair was over sixty he was seduced by his friend Dr. Carlyle into learning whist.

Shortly before his death, the doctor was found by the same Dr. Carlyle in a flutter of excitement, as he was expecting the two granddaughters of the Duke of Leinster, who had been told they were not to leave Scotland without seeing the celebrated divine, and declared that he must dress himself as befitted the occasion. When the guests arrived, however, they turned out to be two little girls of twelve and thirteen accompanied by their governess!

Owing to his various sources of income, Blair was able, in his later days, to keep a carriage, an almost unheard of luxury in those days for the Scottish clergy.

Joseph Richardson, who so judiciously dissuaded Mr. Tickell from placing a tombstone on his first wife's grave, before he found consolation in a second, was a miscellaneous writer, a dramatist, and one of Sheridan's most intimate friends. It was indeed Sheridan's influence which induced Richardson to give up the Bar, where, in spite of a strong provincial accent, he showed considerable powers of oratory, and turn his attention to drama.

When his first comedy, *The Fugitive*, was produced at the King's Theatre, we hear of his being so fearful

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of its success, knowing how much it meant to him, that he dared not go inside the theatre, but paced restlessly up and down the street. Mr. Tickell, however, who had written the epilogue, was there, and after each act ran out and told the agitated Richardson how it was received. So great a success had this comedy, that Richardson was able to buy a fourth part of the theatre from Sheridan.

It was a chance circumstance that brought Richardson to the front. Son of a poor tradesman, his parents were not in a position to give him anything approaching a university education; but a rumour of his talents reached the ears of a kind-hearted lady, who, at her own expense, sent him to college, with the understanding that her share in the expenses would stop when he took his degree.

Unfortunately, this lady, ere long, took it into her head to marry; and her husband, who probably saw no point in her money going out of the family, told his wife it was scarcely seemly that she should go on supporting so fine a young man, and that if she continued, scandalous tongues would wag. So the lady wrote and explained matters to her protégé, who, not wishing to become a burden to his family, left college to seek his fortunes in the world, and as we have seen, he became one of its successes.

Perhaps the most amusing thing that Richardson ever did, was to be buried before his friends were ready; it happened in this way: those who attended his funeral were Sheridan, Mr. Richard Wilson, Dr. Combe the physician, and Taylor. The hour fixed upon was one o'clock, and the friends agreed to call for Sheridan on their way; but when they arrived, Sheridan declared that he had an appointment but would overtake them, which he did. Finding, however, the drive long and the conversation gloomy, when the party changed horses at Hounslow, Sheridan said he would walk on

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ahead. We get a ludicrous picture of him quickening his steps, which he increased to a run when the coach disappeared in the distance, but even this is less ludicrous than the scene which followed. For on arriving at the churchyard, realizing that they were a little late, they put on their mourning cloaks in such haste that they paid no heed to size, the result being that Sheridan's cloak did not come to his knees, while the one worn by Mr. Combe was so long that he stumbled over it at every step.

On reaching the grave they found to their great dismay that the ceremony was already over. Sheridan was especially agitated, for to use his own words: "This disappointment will be imputed to me, and it will be said in town by all our mutual friends that it was owing to Sheridan's d——d negligence which he could not shake off, even to pay respect to the remains of his dearest friend." The clergyman now entered the churchyard, and Taylor told him how disappointed he and his friends were, after travelling twenty miles, and being only a quarter of an hour late, at finding the funeral already over. The clergyman explained that it was the undertaker's fault, who made the excuse that he had another funeral some distance off to attend. Taylor then asked whether the service could not again be read, and after some delay this was done; after which Sheridan said with tragic elation, that having paid his last tribute to his friend he could now face his friends in town.

As Taylor was returning home with him and they entered Lombard Street, Sheridan was seized with such an outburst of sorrow that he leant his head against the nearest house, exclaiming that he had lost his dearest friend, and that in his domestic differences with Mrs. Sheridan there would now be no one to be his "confidential agent." Moore accounts for this outburst of sorrow by the fact that Sheridan had previously

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“drained the ‘cup of memory’ to his friend till he found oblivion at the bottom.” Taylor did his best to comfort the bereaved Sheridan, and on parting from him was designated as “Joe Richardson’s legacy.”

## CHAPTER XII

John Stewart—John Singleton Copley—Thomas Edward—Henry Cavendish—William Hazlitt.

JOHN STEWART, the traveller, better known as "Walking Stewart," was a curious character of those days: it is said that Stewart travelled on foot through most of the world, amongst other countries, Lapland, where he penetrated a mile and a half farther than any previous traveller.

The son of an affluent linen-draper in Bond Street; when his education at Charterhouse had terminated, he obtained a writership in the East India Company; but Stewart was one of those unlucky individuals who are up against their surroundings, and believing what was no doubt true, that many abuses were being perpetrated, he wrote to the authorities at home. A bombardment of correspondence ensued, which proved perfectly futile, and Stewart decided on relinquishing his post, and seeking other work among the native powers. But realizing perhaps that he knew too much, his employers were in no haste to let him go; and after some remarkable adventures, amongst others that of being taken prisoner by Hyder Ali's troops, he entered the service of the Nabob of Arcot.

This post was far from lucrative, and seeing no prospect of his being paid the large sum owed him by the Nabob, whose own affairs were in a very embarrassed state, he determined to return to Europe through Persia. Discovering, however, that Persia



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was at war with some neighbouring power, Stewart made up his mind to travel by a trading vessel that was leaving the country.

But a new difficulty presented itself, for Stewart being looked upon in the light of an infidel, the captain and crew feared that ill-fortune might overtake them were he permitted to travel as an ordinary traveller. In vain he protested that he would keep to his own society—the risk was too great. However, after much thought, and some subtle arguments on the part of Stewart, the captain at last agreed that a cage should be fastened to the side of the ship, and in this cage Stewart might with impunity be allowed to travel.

Great was the excitement of the whole crew when Stewart triumphantly stepped into his cage; but each day found him more dejected, for the weather was bad, and the spray splashed him unmercifully. Food was handed to him in a gingerly sort of way, and as he sat looking mournfully over the sea, wrapped in all the garments he had been able to muster, the passengers peered in at the bars, at the same time praying that the cage would act as a barrier between them and the wrath of their gods. At the end of a fortnight the ship reached its destination, and Stewart, cold, stiff and chastened in spirit, was released from his cage.

With the money he had acquired in India, we hear of his travelling on foot in various parts of Europe, before arriving in England, which country he, after a while, left for America, to give lectures on Evolution; a very circumscribed form of Evolution, as, according to Stewart, after this life we should *all* become animals. But in spite of his very genuine sincerity, he was able to kindle little enthusiasm among those who would have found it infinitely more alluring to learn how one dollar could produce two; and his

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finances having become so exhausted, he was reduced to asking a very rich man he had known in India to allow him to sit in his kitchen, and to provide a "Johnny" cake for his daily nourishment. Both these modest requests, we may add, were refused. We gather, however, that from another source "Johnny" cakes were forthcoming, as well as sufficient money to bring him to England. And, later, when the affairs of the Nabob were settled, Stewart received some sixteen thousand pounds.

After paying his debts, he took a house in Cockspur Street, where he delighted in asking a few friends to dine every Sunday evening; and before the wine was removed, he delivered a short lecture on his special doctrines. But his friends, like his audiences in America, obviously showed themselves bored by these dissertations, and their poor host found they preferred talking to one another to listening to him. So, evening parties with music were substituted, and proved a much greater success; the company being in no way depressed by the *Dead March in Saul*, which was invariably played as a hint for the guests to take their departure.

Stewart published several books on abstruse subjects, among which were *Travels to Discover the Source of Moral Motion*. Whether any light was shed on Moral Motion, history does not relate, but his friends, fearing perhaps that his brain might collapse under the strain of grappling with such obscure subjects, begged him to write a book on his travels, but this he stolidly refused to do, saying that his were travels of the mind.

His odd theories, combined with the peculiarity of his language, made people declare that Stewart was mad, though in conversation he was perfectly clear; and his advice so sound that a lady once said he could even give her the best directions for "the making of a pudding." Yet, undoubtedly, his mind was ill-

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balanced, and nothing showed this more than his lacking the sense of proportion. He believed, for instance, that his philosophy was of such enormous value that sooner or later the world would be obliged to accept it. He even went so far as to think of having his name engraved in large letters on a projecting rock in the Atlantic, so that people's curiosity should be aroused and lead them to study his doctrines.

Under the impression that people were plotting to destroy his books, Stewart begged his friends to wrap up some copies of his works carefully, so as to preserve them from moisture; and on his death-bed, have them buried in some particular spot, eight or nine feet deep.

The familiar figure of Stewart, dressed in black, a long spencer, a red handkerchief sticking out of his pocket, his hat and boots covered with dust, was often to be seen, either resting on a bench, or shuffling and shambling along in the regions of the Strand or Charing Cross.

On his death, an empty bottle of laudanum was found in his bedroom—perhaps Stewart had deliberately extended the range of his travels.

To travel with a friend is always a doubtful experiment, and Walking Stewart showed wisdom in taking his journeys alone. John Singleton Copley, the painter, on the contrary, seems to have been more than ordinarily indiscreet in his choice of a companion. Copley had lived in America until he was thirty-seven, but having saved sufficient money to enable him to travel for three years, he determined on carrying out his long-cherished scheme of going to Italy, taking England on the way. In his brief visit to London, we are told that he found few friends, but many counsellors; and it was in London, apparently that he stumbled upon one, Carter by name, American by nationality, artist by profession, with whom he agreed to travel to Italy.

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In the journal which Copley kept of his travels, he gives us a minute description of this peculiarly disagreeable and peevish person.

“This companion of mine is rather a singular character; he seems happy at taking things at the wrong end, and laboured near an hour to-day to prove that a huckaback towel was softer than a Barcelona silk handkerchief.” And again: “My agreeable companion suspects he has got cold upon his lungs. He is sitting by a fire, the heat of which makes me very faint; a silk handkerchief about his head, and a white pocket one about his neck, applying fresh fuel, and complaining that the wood of this country don’t give half the heat the wood of America does. . . . He has never asked me yet, and we have been up an hour, how I do, or how I have passed the night—’tis an engaging creature.” And upon another occasion, we hear that one traveller wishes to ride while the other is equally determined to walk, and they stop in a shower of rain to argue the knotty point. Moreover, Carter was mightily puffed up at being able to speak a little Italian, which according to Copley he did very ill; and the culminating point to his iniquities was, that not only did Carter flatly contradict his companion before company, but he caricatured him when they parted—“an engaging creature,” indeed!

The following year Copley returned to London, and through the interest of his friend, West, the artist, he was afterwards elected a Royal Academician.

One day a gentleman called upon Copley, desiring that he would paint a family group of himself, his wife and his seven children. When the picture was finished, the gentleman expressed his entire satisfaction: “It wants but one thing,” he said, “and that is the portrait of my first wife—for this one is my second.” Copley suggested that as the lady was dead she could hardly be admitted except as an angel; but the gentle-

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man declared that he wanted no "angels," that she must come into the picture as a woman. Her portrait was then added, and Copley saw no more of his strange visitor for a considerable time; but when he re-appeared, a strange lady was hanging on his arm. The gentleman then explained that an accident had befallen his second wife, and he now desired Copley to include yet a third wife in the family picture; and this being done, he looked with great complacency at his three wives!

Not so the lady, who declared that it was monstrous, never had such a thing been heard of before, and eventually her predecessors had to be painted out. Moreover, it was with the greatest difficulty, and only after he had appealed to the law, Copley obtained payment for the two "obliterated" ladies.

In spite of the large number of portraits that he painted, Copley was so slow with his brush that he often wearied out his sitters. It is said indeed that when he painted the royal group at Windsor Castle, the Queen (Queen Charlotte), children, dogs, and parrots, all grew equally tired, and the Queen complained bitterly to the King. But West, to whom Copley owed his commission, declared that his brother countryman was painting a very fine portrait, and must be allowed to continue it in his own way.

Of Copley's domestic life we hear little, beyond the fact that it was an unusually happy one, and that his son became one of England's famous Lord Chancellors, and was afterwards created Lord Lyndhurst.

There were no famous Lord Chancellors, no high-born descendants in the pedigree of Thomas Edward, the famous Scottish naturalist who was born a year before the death of Copley; his was hardly the story which would attract much attention. Could the birds, beasts, insects, etc., have been able to speak, they would have been able to whisper what no man could tell: they were his friends, he loved and under-



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stood them, he lived in their world. But how could one expect, other than his parents, poor, simple, country folk, to be anything but sorely perplexed over this son of theirs, so different to anybody else's son, of whom they had ever heard. This precocious infant, who was able to toddle when he was ten months old, and who, if touched, set up an unholy yell!

His mother owned that Thomas was the worst baby she had ever nursed; and she tells how, when about four months old, he nearly succeeded in jumping out of her arms in his endeavour to catch some flies he had seen buzzing on the window. When, in later years, he was asked what first inspired his passion for natural history, "Tam" as he was called, replied that he supposed it was the same impulse which made him catch the flies on the window, he knew of no other.

Apart from other "beasties," Tam had a special hankering after a certain fierce sow named "Bet," and her family of little ones, and when his mother asked: "Where's Tam?" she invariably received the answer: "Oh! he's awa' wi' the pigs." Fortunately he was still too small to climb the palings of the sty. But one day, when the family were living at Kettle, in Fifeshire, and the child was about a year old, Tam was missing: the whole of the countryside was scoured by the neighbours, suspected gipsies were interrogated: all to no purpose—Tam was really lost this time, and the search had, for the night at least, to be abandoned, while his mother with one or two kindly neighbours sat sadly over the fire. Until the next day, when the pig-wife rushed into the room, and, depositing the child in his mother's lap, cried: "There, woman, there's yer bairn! but for God's sake keep him awa' frae yon place, or he may fare war next time." And, on eager questioning, she added: "Whar wud he be but below Bet and her pigs a' nicht!" From that time it was

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generally believed that Tam had been lifted into the sty by a vindictive woman, who had once been one of his father's loves.

Presently, the Edwards settled in Old Aberdeen; an ideal spot for Tam, with its vast possibilities of watching birds, butterflies, insects, etc., and he failed to see why he should not bring home all that his little arms could carry, in the way of the most odoriferous and unpleasing tadpoles, horse-leeches, etc. But these "venomous beasts" had a way of straying into the adjoining cottages, and, what was still worse, the leeches crawled up their legs. So Tam had frequent severe whippings, and his treasures were thrown away. The one punishment which he could not endure was having his freedom curtailed; once, after some specially bad behaviour, he was tied to the leg of the table, one of his little sisters being left in charge to keep an eye on him: but, legitimately or illegitimately, Tam enlisted the little sister in his service, and between them they set a light to the cord which so securely bound him: he escaped right enough, but left part of the lighted cord behind, unextinguished, which narrowly escaped setting fire to his father's cottage.

When he was between four and five, Tam was sent to school, but he was a born rebel; he played truant whenever it was possible, and persisted on bringing his "beasties" into the school. It makes one heart-sick to read of the brutal cruelty of his masters in those schooldays: the best that ever happened was, when, driven out with blows, he was told to remove his pestilential toads and vermin, and never return.

Yet the child was only six years old when he was sent to work at a tobacco spinner's, where he was given 1s. 2d. a week to make himself useful in various jobs. Life was happier for Tam those next few years, until he was eleven, when he was seriously apprenticed to a drunken shoemaker called Begg, who behaved with

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such savage brutality that Tam's patient endurance turned to an obstinate determination—that nothing would make him return and complete his apprenticeship.

It was natural that he longed desperately to go to sea, to explore new lands; but no captain would take him without his father's permission; so he sorrowfully relinquished the idea. Although nothing would persuade him to return to his old master, after his horrible cruelty, Thomas unearthed a "pupil-master" who was a kindly sort of fellow. But trade grew slack in the shoemaking business, so when Tam was eighteen he volunteered and joined the Militia, for a month's training.

We get a characteristic picture of him breaking away from his first march, to chase a butterfly of rare species which had fluttered by, until he felt his neck suddenly clutched by the vigilant corporal in charge. As, however, it was his first offence, he was acquitted; and, to his credit may it be said, during the remainder of his training he behaved in the most exemplary way.

When young Edward was twenty he went to Banff, where he found a master who gave him employment at his old trade. It is true the hours were long, from six in the morning until nine at night, and the pay was poor. But he had the advantage of being able to keep his "beasties" at the workshop. This was indeed a stroke of luck, for his landlady declared she failed to understand "fat kin' o' a chiel he was. A'boddy tried to keep awa' frae vermin but himsel."

Three years later a wonderful piece of fortune came to Edward: he loved and married a girl who not only loved but understood him. She cared for their children and their home, never grudging him the freedom which was a necessity to his life. Moreover, she contrived that his ever-growing collection should find a resting-place. Poor they were, of course, but they were happy.

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And, gradually, laboriously, with the same marvellous patience which he had shown all his life, did the young naturalist build up his collection : with no instruments, no books and no means of getting any ; he also began to learn writing, his education having been of the most meagre. Many were the accidents which befell him when he was on his naturalist expeditions : terrible falls from the rocks, attacks by savage polecats, weasels and rats, entailing acute suffering ; but Edward had grown used to pain.

All the day he worked at his shoemaking ; his hunting after the "beasties" he did at night, varied occasionally by shoemaking at night, and preserving his specimens during his meal hours. Among other objects, he had specimens of some nine hundred insects ; his horror can, therefore, well be imagined when, on going up to the garret to bring down the cases, he found that rats or mice had devoured his whole collection of insects—the work of four years. To his wife he went for the consolation which he never sought in vain—"It's an awfu' disappointment," she said, "but I think the best thing will be to set to work and fill them up again." Thomas took her advice, and a new collection was started, and again his little home began to be packed by specimens of every kind.

Now, there was a "feeing" fair held twice a year at Banff, when the boys and girls came to be "hired," and which was attended by all the farmers and their wives. Among the attractions were "pig-faced ladies," "fire swallows," and such-like. It occurred to Edward that he might hold an exhibition at this fair, of all he had collected during the last eight years. But once again fate laughed in his face, for nearly two thousand plants he had carefully pressed had been destroyed by rats or mice. What remained, however, of his collection he sent to the fair, which paid his expenses and left him with a small sum in hand.

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Believing that recognition was at last within his grasp, he now started collecting for another exhibition, which met with greater success than the first; moreover, he began to attract a certain interest. This suggested to the naturalist a more ambitious scheme, so he hired a room in Aberdeen, and when all arrangements had been completed the collection was packed into six extra large carrier carts: and the whole family—Edward, his wife, and their five children—accompanied the collection into Aberdeen. Handbills and advertisements had been already circulated: the price of admittance was modest enough: “Ladies and Gentlemen, sixpence; Tradesmen, half price; Children, threepence.”

But, alas! the scheme on which he had built such high expectations proved a fiasco; a number of persons arrived to *sell* stuffed birds, and the like; a few ladies looked in to ask advice about their sick cats and other pets; some professors, too, dropped in, who were genuinely interested in the naturalist's collection, though warning him that he was too much in advance of his times. But none of these visitors provided him with the wherewithal to pay his expenses, nor the money to take him and his family back to Banff; and as a climax—his master wrote that unless he returned immediately his place would be filled.

The situation was, indeed, a desperate one, and out of sheer despair Edward determined on ending his life: he had already taken off his coat preparatory to jumping into the sea, when he caught sight of a flock of sanderlings with which was a large strange bird. And every other emotion was temporarily extinguished in his curiosity regarding this strange bird, as, without a moment's thought, he dashed after the flock. For at least an hour he pursued them, alas! to no purpose—but the wish to end his life had passed. Sadly and wearily enough, Edward returned to



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Aberdeen, and the only solution which came to him the following day was—to sell the results of his years of labour, in order to pay his debts. A bitter enough solution, but he did not falter; his treasures were put up for sale, and realized the pitiful sum of £20 10s.

So he tramped back to Banff, leaving his family behind, as they were unable to walk the fifty miles on foot: but the same carrier who had taken them into Aberdeen, so full of hope, now drove them home asking no remuneration.

And once again came the routine of shoemaking and of starting yet another collection: the naturalist found his hat made an excellent insect box for his butterflies, by having an artificial crown made in the upper part of it, stuck with pins. Being of an intensely shy and modest nature, Edward wrote of his discoveries in natural history only in the local newspapers: but eventually he was persuaded to write articles in the *Zoologist* and the *Naturalist*.

By the time he was forty-three, he embarked on his third collection. But nature will not always be ignored, the privations he had endured, the cold wet nights spent out in the open, broke him down at last. In order to pay his doctor's bills and to provide food for his family, he was compelled to sell his third collection. Though he recovered to a certain degree, his work now drifted into a new channel, one which brought him more fame: in other words he devoted himself entirely to all the wonders of the seashore. In this the fishermen were induced to give him all their assistance, and to send "Tam" beasts of the sea, and allow his daughters to strip their nets of the "rubbish" they contained.

All these years, promises of help in the form of money, books, etc., were unceasing, but they were mostly empty words. It is true he had been appointed keeper of the Scientific Society's Museum at Banff, at the dazzling sum of two guineas a year. There was also

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talk of his being "recommended" to assist in natural history, the curators and professors at the College of Surgeons, the salary being £1 10s. a year. But, as usual, the information was incorrect, and it transpired that what was really needed was a fourth porter, whose duties were to keep the room clean, and see the bottles were dusted! This post, needless to say, was declined.

In 1866, Edward was unanimously elected as Associate of the Linnean Society, the greatest honour he could have had, and a member of less important ones; and ten years later his name appeared on the civil list, to receive a pension of £50. But honours do not lessen poverty; and though the naturalist was assisted by his children, who numbered eleven, in the later years of his life he returned to his shoemaking. To his biographer, and best friend, Samuel Smiles, he said that at no time of his life had he been able to make more than eight shillings a week.

This biography contains a portrait of Edward, with a lined, rugged face; kindness, too, is written there. Money had tarried long in coming, health had long since vanished; still Edward lingered, working at his shoemaking, worshipping always his great god, Nature, until the flame of life, which had grown very dim, flickered out—for the first time the great naturalist rested. . . .

We hear from Dr. W. S. Bruce of The Manse, Banff, that a stone of fine monumental architecture, in pure Kemny granite, was erected to the memory of Edward in Banff cemetery—the work of Dr. Kitty, architect, Aberdeen.

Henry Cavendish, the "Newton of Chemistry" as he was called, and the rival of James Watt, is an interesting example of how science can dominate a nature to the exclusion of all emotion. Cavendish was born in 1731: we hear little of him until he left Cambridge, which he did before taking his degree, when he

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was given a small allowance by his father ; and a set of rooms were fitted up for him, which had formerly been a stable. There have been various reasons suggested as to why Lord Charles kept his son so short of money ; some believed that he allowed him all he could afford, while others declared that he was displeased because his son had not taken up some public career.

When Cavendish was about forty he was left a large fortune by a relation ; but being wholly devoid of social instincts, no riches would have allured him into mixing more than was absolutely necessary with his fellow men. Possibly had he come into his kingdom earlier, other forces might have worked in his nature.

His intense shyness was indeed almost a disease ; to be addressed by a stranger was an infliction not to be endured ; and when such a calamity happened he would instantly make his escape with a half-stifled cry, which must have considerably astonished the stranger. Yet, his position in the world of science forced him occasionally to attend such parties as those given by the celebrated Sir Joseph Banks, probably in some weird attire, for we hear his dress was at least a century behind the times. In the most acute misery he would pause on the landing, and was only driven into the reception-room by hearing someone coming up behind him, whom the thought of encountering was even a greater nightmare than facing the assembled company. At one of these parties an Austrian gentleman was presented to him, who exclaimed enthusiastically that one of his principal reasons for visiting London was to make the acquaintance of the great chemist. Awkward and embarrassed, Cavendish listened to these flattering words, until perceiving an opening in the crowd he made a dash for the door, sprang into his carriage, and drove home in all haste. Yet in spite of his slow and hesitating speech, under favourable conditions Cavendish spoke very much to the point ; it might be some valuable

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piece of information, or an important conclusion at which he had arrived.

Dr. Wollaston declared that the best way to talk to him was to speak as though one were talking into space, and by this method one might "set him agoing." It seems almost out of the picture to hear of Cavendish being a member of the "Crown and Anchor," and the "Cat and Bagpipes" Clubs; the latter, which was at the corner of Dover Street, appears to have been a well-known public-house, at one time frequented as a beer shop, and had for its sign the "Cat and Bagpipes."

Cavendish had his town house at the corner of Gower Street, but his large library of scientific books he kept in Dean Street: it was typical of this great man that he always solemnly signed a receipt whenever he took out any of his own books. The great Humbolt received permission to make use of this library on the strict understanding that under no circumstances was he to address Cavendish, not even to give him a polite greeting.

Apart from his house in Gower Street, Cavendish had a beautiful villa at Clapham; though only a small part was given up to any sort of comfort. The dining-room was furnished as a laboratory and the ante-room as a forge, while the upper rooms were converted into an observatory. On the lawn was a wooden stage, by means of which a large tree could be climbed, to the top of which Cavendish sometimes ascended for astronomical and other experiments. Once a year he received his heir, Lord George Cavendish, for about half an hour; but visitors were seldom seen either here or in Gower Street, and on the rare occasions when friends were asked to dine, they were invariably treated to the same menu—a leg of mutton. Once, when four scientists were invited to dinner, Cavendish's housekeeper ventured to suggest that a leg of mutton was not sufficient for five people, to which he replied: "Well, then, get two."



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In spite of his once saving a lady from the too close attentions of a mad cow, not even his best friend could have called the great scientist "gallant"; women were in fact a positive terror to him. Woe betide any maid-servant whom he met accidentally on the stairs, for she received instant dismissal; indeed after encountering one of the maids armed with a broom and pail, Cavendish, to avoid a similar experience, ordered a back staircase to be made at his villa at Clapham. Even his housekeeper he seldom interviewed, for he ordered his dinner by means of a note which she found each day on the hall table.

A story is also told of how one day at the Royal Society, of which Cavendish was a Fellow, the members noticed a particularly pretty girl watching them from an upper window; with one accord the learned men rose to catch a better view of the fair damsel; Cavendish believing them to be looking at the moon hurried also in his impatient way to the window. It is easy to imagine his feelings on perceiving the real object of their interest, as with a grunt of disgust he turned away.

There were few things that the scientist disliked more than being worried over business matters: one of the partners of his bank once called to ask whether he would not like to invest his large balance. With great difficulty this gentleman obtained admission; and Cavendish having listened to what the banker had to say, observed that if keeping so large a balance was any trouble to the bankers he would remove it elsewhere; eventually, however, on condition that he was not again plagued, he agreed to have the money invested. Cavendish had a method of his own in distributing his charities, the secret of which has not been disclosed; but it had apparently nothing to do with the deserving qualities of the case, as no inquiries seem ever to have been made.

Cavendish adored routine; when he visited the Royal Society Club his hat was always hung on the same peg;



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his boots were always brought down and placed against the dining-room door; and in one particular boot his stick was always to be found. We are told that he calculated the arrival of his tailor to make him a new suit, with the same precision as he would the advent of a comet. The only reason he departed from his usual habits, was when he was driven from his old haunts by finding them invaded, and perceived that he was being watched by the invaders.

This great chemist from whom the Cavendish Society took its name, lived his nearly fourscore years untouched by any human passion or imagination; he never gave out affection and apparently had no need of it; even to the beauty of nature he was indifferent. Nor does ambition appear to have ever been awakened in him, for he is said deliberately to have kept back some of his discoveries. His death was in harmony with his life: he ordered his servant to leave the house until evening, as he had "something particular to engage his thoughts, and did not wish to be disturbed by anyone." When the servant returned, his master was dying, and during the early hours of the morning this human clock had "run down."

Although differing in many respects from Cavendish, that remarkable man William Hazlitt, the essayist and theatrical critic, was also a victim to intense shyness; it is said, indeed, that Hazlitt always entered a room as though he had been brought back to it in custody. After shuffling sideways to a chair he would seat himself on the edge; and having jerked out his usual, but not original observation that "it was a fine day," he relapsed into silence and resigned himself to his fate. If, however, the conversation did not please him, he rose from his chair, and taking an abrupt leave of the company, he shuffled out of the room much as he had shuffled in. But until the street door closed upon him, Hazlitt did not feel altogether secure; for there was always a

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possibility of meeting some servant on his way out, a contingency which filled him with as great dismay as it did Cavendish : for the servant class was the only class whose ridicule he feared and of whom he stood really in awe.

The son of a Unitarian minister. Hazlitt was originally designed for the Church, and it was much to his father's vexation that he preferred the vocation of an artist, for which he seems to have had considerable talent. But his ideal was high and he underestimated his powers; and at the end of three or four years he abandoned art for literature and journalism. Yet we hear that Hazlitt hated writing, and only wrote when funds were particularly low; but as this condition of impecuniosity was fairly chronic, and moreover his ideas did not atrophy during his sluggish periods, we get such admirable works from his pen as the *Life of Napoleon*, *The Spirit of the Age*, *Table Talk*, etc.

Apart from his morbid egotism which poisoned the joys of success, perhaps the greatest misfortune in Hazlitt's life was his inability to avoid quarrelling with his friends; the reasons are obvious enough, for anyone who is not a fool—or a genius—knows that to discuss openly the weakness and follies of our best friends, as Hazlitt did, is not the best means of preserving friendship.

For his part, Hazlitt cared not a straw as to what anyone said of him; although any real or imagined slight was magnified into a crime, which only stern retribution could wipe out: "I care little," he writes, "for what anyone says behind my back, and in the way of critical and analytical discussion; it is looks of dislike and scorn that I answer with the worst venoms of my pen."

P. S. Patmore, who afterwards became one of Hazlitt's most intimate friends, tells us how he once quoted some phrase or illustration in *Blackwood*, which had previously been used by Hazlitt in the *London*

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*Magazine*, without mentioning him as his authority. A most violent onslaught against Patmore in the *London Magazine* was the result, in which, among other pleasantries, Hazlitt alluded to him as a "petty larceny rascal." It turned out eventually, that the real cause of the grievance had nothing whatever to do with the unlucky article in *Blackwood*, but that Hazlitt imagined he had been cut by Patmore in the street!

When writing on his own character, Hazlitt says that he was often accused of getting into a passion; but "if anyone wishes to see me quite calm, they may cheat me in a bargain, or tread upon my toes." Yet, allowing that Hazlitt was able to control his temper when worsted in a bargain, or when his toes were trampled upon, he certainly could not control it where politics were concerned; he had an equal detestation both of Whigs and Tories, and his adoration of Napoleon made him furious with those who rejoiced in his downfall. Indeed the embittered side of Hazlitt's nature has sometimes been traced to the overthrow of Napoleon; believing, as he did, that in the return of monarchy, honour and liberty would be sacrificed. "For my own part," he writes, "I started in life with the French Revolution, and I have lived to see the end of it. . . . My sun arose with the first dawn of liberty, and I did not think how soon both must set."

Hazlitt was for a short time Parliamentary reporter to the *Daily Chronicle*; but the late hours, combined with too great a partiality for spirits, told upon his health. We catch a humorous glimpse of him before he resigned his post, being so absorbed in listening to a political speech that he forgot to take any notes!

Although at no time a very hard drinker, Hazlitt had the strength of mind to entirely renounce spirits, which he replaced by countless libations of very strong tea; and which are said to have been even more disastrous to his weak digestion than alcohol. Rather,

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however, than appear lacking in good fellowship, Hazlitt would, when dining or supping with his friends, raise a glass of grog to his lips as though to inhale its fragrance; but though tears might fill his eyes he slowly put down the glass, drawing in a long breath while a half yawn or sigh escaped him. At other times his imagination was so vivid that he seemed actually to believe he had tasted the nectar, and struck by remorse he would relapse for a few moments into gloomy silence.

One of Hazlitt's morbid ideas in his later days was that he could never inspire any woman with love. Patmore, who appears to have understood him better than most people, declared that had any human being really loved Hazlitt, especially a woman, it would have been his salvation. He seems, himself, to have subconsciously realized this, for in his *Essay on Love* he says: "I want an eye to cheer me, a hand to guide me, a breast to lean on; all of which I shall never have, but shall stagger into my grave without them, old before my time, unloved and unlovely unless . . . I would have some creature love me before I die. Oh! for the parting hand to ease the fall!"

Although perpetually falling in love, Hazlitt had apparently no liking for young girls. One day Lamb tells us how he once took him to call at a house where there were several very young girls, who "neither laughed, nor sneered, nor giggled, nor whispered," and that Hazlitt sat and frowned, looking blacker every moment, finally insisting upon leaving before supper; moreover, it took all Lamb's powers of persuasion before Hazlitt was coaxed back into good humour, for he declared he "hated young girls—they drove him mad!"

When Hazlitt was thirty he fell in love in a tepid sort of fashion with Miss Stoddart, sister of Dr. Stoddart, and the intimate friend of Mary Lamb. Miss Stoddart was a year or two older than Hazlitt and had

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already had several admirers; but her lovers had a way of cooling off before the wedding day. One of Hazlitt's letters to Miss Stoddart during their courtship, if it fails in sentiment shows a certain naïve simplicity: "I never love you so well as when I think of sitting down with you to dinner on a boiled scrag-end of mutton and hot potatoes!"

How good to have been at that wedding! where Charles Lamb was the best man; and at which his sister—wearing a dress over which there had been much discussion as to the respective merits of a spotted muslin, a "sprigged" gown, or a new silk—was the only bridesmaid. Her own tragic illness, her vanished youth, were all forgotten in sheer delight at her friend's happiness. We gather that Lamb's behaviour on that occasion was not all that could be desired, for he writes: "I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Everything awful makes me laugh."

For the first few years of their married life, Hazlitt and his wife lived at a cottage in Wiltshire, belonging to Mrs. Hazlitt. It was here that their only child who survived infancy was born. Haydon, the painter, tells us how he was invited to the christening of the precious baby: evidently mistrusting the nature of the refreshments he was likely to be offered, Haydon made a hasty meal before starting. On arriving at Hazlitt's house he found Mrs. Hazlitt sitting by the fire, wearing a "bed-gown" and looking very ill, while everything in the room showed disorder and neglect. Upon asking for Hazlitt, his wife replied: "Oh, dear, William has gone to look for a parson." But no parson was available, and the christening had to be postponed until another day.

The affection for their child was the one link which united Hazlitt and his wife; after they retired to London their lives diverged more and more until they agreed to



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separate. Mrs. Hazlitt was a woman of culture and some individuality; but she was not particularly sympathetic nor particularly unselfish. Moreover, she had no idea of making a home comfortable, and annoyed Hazlitt in the hundred and one ways in which people can annoy one another.

The early hours of the morning did not appeal to Hazlitt, who seldom rose before one or two, when he would sit over his breakfast, which consisted of a toasted roll and very black coffee, until four or five in the afternoon; his dinner or supper he usually took at the Southampton coffee-house, which was one of the few he patronized. For Hazlitt would go to no coffee-house where his odd ways were not known, nor where there was a chance of the bill being presented; not that Hazlitt had any intention of evading the bill, but he liked his own times for doing things.

Perhaps the essayist grew weary of his solitary life and bachelor ways, and pined once more after a woman's friendship and sympathy. For he made friends with Sarah Walker, the daughter of his landlord, comparing her beauty to pictures of the Madonna. Sarah, who was much better educated than most of her class, coquetted a little and flattered a good deal more; when, however, Hazlitt obtained a divorce from his wife under the Scottish law, and asked Sarah to marry him, she declined, preferring a younger lover.

For a time Hazlitt was distracted, but two years later he found consolation in a second matrimonial enterprise; this time the lady being a widow of some property. After their marriage they started for a prolonged tour abroad, and in France we hear of an accidental meeting between Hazlitt and his first wife, and of their exchanging civilities! This is, however, less surprising, as the first Mrs. Hazlitt had always been more or less amicable over the divorce; indeed the day the verdict was given, she and her late husband

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drank tea together, giving one another good advice the while, and airing their views upon matters in general!

At the end of about two years, Hazlitt and his son—who had joined his father and stepmother abroad—returned alone to England; but when a week or two later Hazlitt wrote and asked his wife when he should fetch her home, she replied that she had gone to Switzerland with her sister, and had parted from him for ever. They never met again, and thus abruptly ended the chapter of Hazlitt's second marriage.

In appearance Hazlitt was of medium height, slight, with black hair, which curled stiffly over his temples. His face had something painful in it, and when offended we are told that it assumed quite a terrifying expression.

Through his inability to keep his friends, Hazlitt's closing years were somewhat solitary. But though there had been a temporary coolness between himself and Lamb, owing to one of the usual grievances, they became reconciled; and in Hazlitt's last illness—when he was only fifty-two—Lamb was a constant visitor, and was with him at the end.

Strange though it seems when one considers how much mental misery Hazlitt must have suffered, the last words he ever spoke were: "I've led a happy life." Perhaps an entry in his autobiography suggests the explanation: "I have thought and suffered too much to be willing to have thought and suffered in vain. . . ."



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